

# Australian Garden HISTORY

Vol. 26 No. 1  
July/August/September 2014

*Transforming gardens*





**Cover and above:** Gardens can be transformed and transforming, clearly seen in the work of Australian-born artist and guerrilla gardener Steve Wheen in his London 'pothole gardens' (see story on page 13).  
Photos courtesy Steve Wheen

**Rear cover:** Transforming the garden by artificial means, from the collection of Elizabeth Anya-Petrivna (see story on page 20).  
Photo: Jess Hood

The Ellis Stones Memorial Fund of The University of Melbourne's Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning generously assists publication of *Australian Garden History*.

The Australian Garden History Society is a history and heritage partner of the Australian Museum of Gardening

Text © individual contributors

Images © as individually credited

Design and typography © Australian Garden History Society

#### Patron

Sue Ebury – Countess of Wilton

#### Executive Officer

Phoebe LaGerche-Wijsman

#### Enquiries

TollFree 1800 678 446

Phone 03 9650 5043

Fax 03 9650 8470

#### Email

info@gardenhistorysociety.org.au

#### Website

www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au

#### Postal Address

AGHS, Gate Lodge  
100 Birdwood Avenue  
Melbourne Victoria 3004

#### Publication

*Australian Garden History*, the official journal of the Australian Garden History Society, is published quarterly

#### Editors

Christina Dyson  
Richard Aitken  
editor@gardenhistorysociety.org.au  
8 Eastern Place, Hawthorn East, Victoria, 3123

ISSN 1033-3673

#### Subscriptions (GST INCLUSIVE)

Membership	1 year	3 years
Individual	\$72	\$190
Household	\$98	\$260
Corporate	\$230	\$607
Non-profit organisations	\$98	\$260

#### Advertising Rates

1/8 page \$264  
(2+ issues \$242 each)  
1/4 page \$440  
(2+ issues \$396 each)  
1/2 page \$660  
(2+ issues \$550 each)  
Full page \$1100  
(2+ issues \$990 each)

Inserts \$880

for Australia-wide mailing

Pro-rata for state-wide mailing

#### Editorial Advisory Committee

CONVENOR  
Roslyn Burge

#### MEMBERS

Julie Collins  
Glenn R. Cooke  
Ruth Morgan  
Colleen Morris  
Christine Reid

#### NATIONAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

John Taylor (Chairman)  
Ray Choate (Vice Chairman)  
Laurel Cheetham (Secretary)  
Kathy Wright (Treasurer)  
Stuart Read (Public Officer)

#### Elected Members

Roslyn Burge  
Ray Choate  
Jessica Hood  
Elaine Lawson  
Ruth Morgan  
Stuart Read  
John Taylor  
Kathy Wright

#### State Representatives

ACT Nancy Clarke  
NSW Laurel Cheetham  
QLD Glenn R. Cooke  
SA Richard Heathcote  
TAS Michael Evans  
VIC Val Stewart  
WA Carmel O'Halloran

#### BRANCH CONTACTS

##### ACT/Monaro/Riverina

Sue Byrne  
PO Box 5008  
Lyneham ACT 2602  
(02) 6247 3642  
suebyrne@effect.net.au

##### Northern NSW

Bill Oates  
c/o Heritage Centre,  
University of New England  
Armidale NSW 2350  
woates@une.edu.au

##### Queensland

Glenn R. Cooke  
Phone: 07 3846 1050  
racoontoo@gmail.com

##### South Australia

Ray Choate  
Barr Smith Library  
University of Adelaide  
Adelaide SA 5005  
Phone: 08 8303 4064  
raychoate@adelaide.edu.au

##### Southern Highlands

Jennifer Carroll  
27 Gladstone Road  
Bowral NSW 2577  
carroll.jennifer747@gmail.com

##### Sydney

Stuart Read  
Phone: 02 9326 9468  
stuart1962@bigpond.com

##### Tasmania

Elizabeth Kerry  
PO Box 89, Richmond TAS 7025  
Phone: (03) 6260 4216  
liz.kerry@keypoint.com.au

##### Victoria

Lisa Tuck  
PO Box 479  
Somers VIC 3927  
0418 590 891  
lisatuckl@bigpond.com

##### Western Australia

John Viska  
148 Chelmsford Rd  
North Perth WA 6006  
(08) 9328 1519  
cviska@slope.com

*Australian Garden History* welcomes contributions of any length up to 1200 words. Prospective contributors are strongly advised to send a short outline to the editors prior to submission of text or images.

The views expressed in this journal are those of the contributors and are not necessarily shared by the Australian Garden History Society.



# The nature of things

Anita Angel

In 1878, an unknown correspondent, extolling the uncultivated botanical riches in the vast and varied landscapes of the Far North's nascent colony, observed:

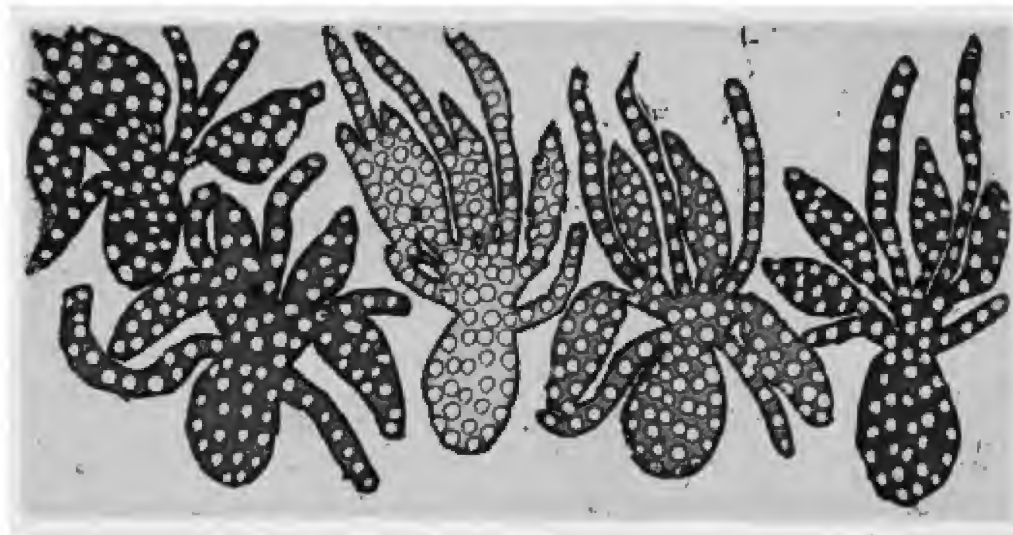
*The physical aspect of this our Northern Territory suggests to one's mind that it had been turned out of the great workshop of Nature in the rough, that the finishing touches had been omitted in order that Art might try its hand in completing the composition.* (Northern Territory Times & Gazette, 31 August 1878)

Steps had been taken with the establishment of Port Darwin (Palmerston) in 1869 to establish a subsistence garden, but it is telling that from the first, our correspondent urged his readers that horticultural activity should not preclude aesthetically driven pursuits. The 'beautiful should not be lost sight of by society' and plans to augment the Territory's natural resources should be complemented by obtaining 'flowers, seeds and choice plants, to gladden the eye with their varied hues and floral loveliness'.

The transformation of a nineteenth-century tropical frontier township found its earliest expression in the concept of a garden as 'nature humanised'. This embraced a primal, place-making strategy reflected in depictions of the region by visiting and resident visual artists: its people, landscapes, flora, and fauna. The engagement by European and Australian non-Indigenous artists with Northern Australia may also be characterised through a parallel place-making device to gardens—artists' camps. They drew their lineage from tented temporary enclosures of explorers, surveyors, and settlers, carrying maps, measuring instruments, sketchbooks, and seeds to chart, claim, and cultivate the unknown.

In time, the impulse and imperative for art shifted from the empirical and topographical to the individual, social, and ecological: a desire not for claim but to be inspired, to reconnect, and to preserve. Unlike the rise of Australian Impressionism, the fragmented record left behind by these often episodic artistic encounters in the Northern Territory did not lead to the birth of a national school or style. Rather, artists' camps and creative sojourns have endured as a contemporary practice and a Romantic tendency in the region's art historical development, giving primacy to the detailed study of the environment *en plein air* and its transformation through the artistic imagination.

In the Northern Territory, Aboriginal peoples have left a legacy of unbroken engagement with the land and a record of their enduring ownership of it *as country*



## Contents

### The nature of things

ANITA ANGEL

3

### Floral clocks: civic pride or horticultural kitsch?

SILAS CLIFFORD-SMITH

5

### The garden as adornable art

VICKI MASON

9

### Home thoughts from abroad: a new chapter in Australian gardening history

LESLEY GARRETT

13

### Journey to the centre of the turf

DAMON YOUNG

17

### Wearing the garden

ELIZABETH ANYA-PETRIVNA

20

### Victor Crittenden OAM (1925–2014)

24

### For the bookshelf

27

### Recent releases

29

### Dialogue

30

### Profile: Val Stewart

31

### AGHS News

32

### Diary dates

34

Who can fully comprehend the mystery and alchemy that take place in the leap between nature, landscape, and art?

Deborah Wurmikidj (b. 1971), *Native grass*, 2001 [detail], etching with chine coll

Charles Darwin University Art Collection (NTU989)

Reproduced with permission of the artist & Maningrida Arts and Culture

through art, pre-dating non-Indigenous settlement by millennia. Initially recorded in extensive galleries of rock art and through ceremonial and performance-related body and ground painting, its iconography and related narratives were transposed from 'earth art' to contemporary art through post-contact introduction of new materials and techniques. Pencils, crayons, acrylic paint, canvas, linen, and paper, along with European techniques of printmaking, enabled Aboriginal art's release from ethnography and its reception into the realm of Australian art history. In the process, our Western definitions of landscape art and our sense of human scale, perspective, and time—as much as our political beliefs and values—were radically recalibrated or overturned.

Since the 1960s, non-formalist and site-specific environmental or land art, often ephemeral and incorporating natural materials, has reflected a move away from easel-painting with sable brushes, abandoning pictorial views and vistas for a direct engagement with nature and natural forces. Art and the writing of art history were thereby transformed. A multidisciplinary approach to aesthetics became necessary, pioneered in the field of environmental history—the study of human interactions with the natural world over time. Reinstating the role of nature as an active

force in human affairs, rather than as a backdrop to human history, environmental historians drove home the notion that it is impossible to relate to nature without culture: the two are inseparable. Nature was no longer 'out there' as an element external to our being, nor simply a subject for an artist to resolve in a new medium, but an intrinsic part of ourselves—our *own* nature.

In a chapter of *Modern Painters* (1843) entitled 'Of Leaf Beauty', John Ruskin wrote: 'If you can paint one leaf, you can paint the World'. He argued that only through artists' detailed study of individual elements of nature could strength and truth be discovered sufficient to enable the last critical and creative step to be taken: the alteration of nature beyond material appearances through the artistic imagination. Today, whether tackling the big picture perspective of Australian landscape art, the immersive exigencies of contemporary environmental art or the expanded and enriched perspective afforded by Aboriginal art, Ruskin's advice holds true: we would do well to look for those fragments of 'small things forgotten' that attune our senses and our feelings to the nature of things.

Anita Angel is Curator, Charles Darwin University Art Collection & Art Gallery, Darwin, Northern Territory.

Transformations through art bring with them nuances at once highly personal and intimate: gardens of the mind inspired by the wider landscape, cultivated within the artistic imagination.

John Firth-Smith (b. 1943),  
*Down at the artists camp / mosquito nets / Arnhem Land*  
1981 [detail], gouache & mixed media on Arches paper

Charles Darwin University Art Collection (CDU2587).  
Gifted in memory of the artist's late sister, Margaret Ann Firth-Smith, 2013

Reproduced with permission of John Firth-Smith







Silas Clifford-Smith

## Floral clocks: civic pride or horticultural kitsch?

The floral clock—once a popular garden feature—has largely escaped the attention of garden historians, but it is high time these quirky timepieces were reassessed.

One of the horticultural oddities of the last century is the floral clock. Most of us have encountered them from time to time during our travels, often sighted on gentle slopes in manicured public gardens at tourist destinations. Apart from a moment's thought at the sophistication of the technology and the intricate plantings used by the designers, most of these outdoor landscapes are soon forgotten. As a working gardener I've had a fascination with these quirky garden features throughout much of my working life. Not only are they a reflection of the design and propagation skills of their creators but they also express the civic pride and wealth of the community in which they are located.

Floral clocks are found throughout the world but usually within temperate latitudes within societies which can afford the high cost of upkeep. Hotspots for these horologically functional novelties include North America, Europe,

Australia, and New Zealand. But floral clocks of one form or another can be found in other areas of the world too—I know of examples in India, China, and Japan, and recently stumbled on one in the Cambodian capital Phnom Penh, hardly a city we connect with municipal prosperity.

While mostly associated with twentieth-century landscape design practice, floral clocks have a history that dates back to the eighteenth century (and even earlier if their horological cousin the sundial is included). The celebrated eighteenth-century Swedish naturalist Carl Linnaeus was, for example, obsessed with the possibilities of creating a botanical clock, known as a *Horologe* or *Watch of Flora*, made up of 46 different flowering plants which opened and closed as the day progressed, thus informing the viewer of the time of day.

Linnaeus's plan seems solely an intellectual fancy restricted to observations of the habits of individual plants, and to the best of our knowledge his clock was never constructed. Despite this, his research in Uppsala found a receptive audience over the following decades and 'dial plants' were sometimes grown in botanical collections. The early nineteenth-century British

Stereograph image of the large floral clock at the 1904 World's Fair in St. Louis, Missouri.  
Courtesy Silas Clifford-Smith

Postcard view of the floral clock in the Princes Street Gardens, Edinburgh, showing the 1971 summer planting celebrating the bicentennial of the birth of Sir Walter Scott.  
Courtesy Silas Clifford-Smith



gardening authority J.C. Loudon, for instance, listed a number of dial plants suitable for the purpose in his influential *Encyclopaedia of Gardening* (1822).

During the nineteenth century, floral or carpet bedding became increasingly popular and gardeners experimented in constructing intricate designs combining brightly coloured plants sourced from around the world. Reflecting the tastes of the time, gardeners tried to make plants

look like something else. While many such bedding designs were laid out in private gardens the increasing establishment of public parks saw these skills transferred into a civic setting.

While carpet bedding began to lose popularity in the late nineteenth century there was clearly an interest to use the skills learnt in 'bedding-out' in a new modern way. Reflecting the advances in technology it is not surprising that someone would eventually build an outdoor clock



Postcard view of the floral clock at Sydney's Taronga Zoo, the first built in Australia.  
Courtesy Silas Clifford-Smith

decorated with living plants, with the time being articulated by machine (clock hands) rather than by the plants themselves.

The earliest known example of a floral clock was the *l'horloge fleurie* created by a French horticulturist named Debort in the Trocadéro gardens in Paris (1892). Not long after, another was constructed across the Atlantic at Water Works Park, Detroit (1893) and a decade later the still-extant clock at West Princes Street Gardens, Edinburgh (1903). Another significant early example was the giant clock created for the 1904 World's Fair in St Louis,

of them, and as plantings changed each year these postcard views offer a revealing record of changing design approaches. The best-known example of this chronological record is of the Edinburgh floral clock, photographed by postcard sellers most years since 1903. Designs used for this high-profile example have celebrated royal celebrations and civic achievements as well as anniversaries of significant local worthies.

The first floral clock in Australia was built in Sydney's Taronga Zoo in 1928 and since that time it has been a popular landmark destination.



Women positioned on the hour marks of the floral clock at Taronga Zoo, Sydney, c.1930s. (National Library of Australia image from the Fairfax archive of glass plate negatives) nla.pic-vn6292220/Fairfax Syndication

Missouri. Other early floral clocks were also constructed in Le Mans, Interlaken, Budapest, and elsewhere in Europe.

After the first wave of interest in floral clocks some of these were abandoned due to the upheavals of the Great War, but during the 1920s and 1930s interest in the concept returned. With the increasing popularity of the motor car many towns constructed floral clocks as tourist attractions and many new floral clocks were constructed in English coastal towns.

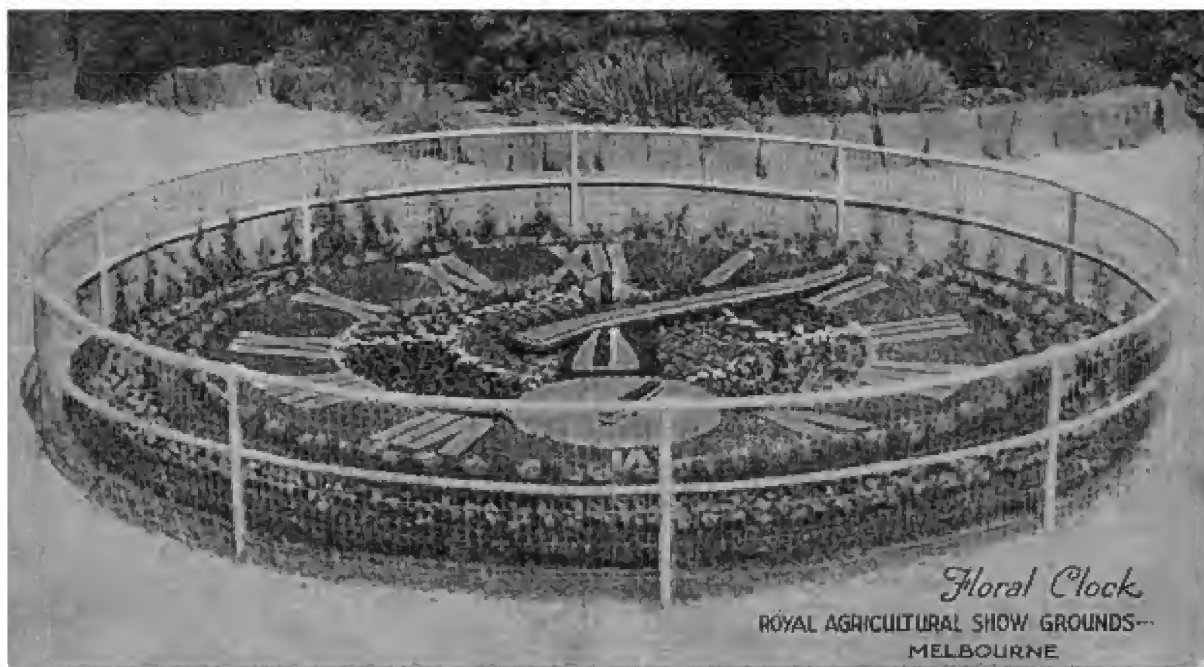
Floral clocks came on the scene at the same time as the fashion for postcard collecting so it comes as no surprise that these gardens would become a popular subject. Thanks to the popularity of postcard collecting we have a record of nearly all

In 1930 a clock was built at the Royal Agricultural Showground in Melbourne. This example was constructed at the height of the Great Depression and the mechanism was made out of scrap parts, a thrifty showpiece which was a popular curio at the showground for many years. Following the construction of the large clock in Melbourne's King's Domain, however, the Showground dial lost its uniqueness and was later removed.

As someone who has planted out formal annual beds I am in awe of the skill of the gardeners who plant-out the dials of these clocks. While some modern dials are decorated with mass plantings and coloured gravels, the true floral clock is decorated with thousands of tiny individual plants that have been raised from seed prior to planting out.

Postcard image of floral clock at Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria showgrounds, Melbourne (1930), planted out by Messrs C.E. Isaac & Sons.

Courtesy Silas Clifford-Smith



Many of the locations of the early clocks were found in temperate climates with cold winters. Therefore the annual planting-out of the dial face only occurred in spring, after the end of the cold weather, as many of the plants were frost tender. Plant selection was important but with the large range of plants imported from around the world designers have had a large range of plants from which to choose.

Succulents are a popular choice in many floral clock planting schemes. Hardy sedum and sempervivum are desirable as they are easy to propagate, diminutive in size, and come in a large range of colours. Less hardy choices include the larger-sized echeveria and agave. While there are many suitable non-succulent plants, popular choices include alternanthera, lobelia, alyssum, senecio, coleus, iberis, feverfew (*Tanacetum parthenium*), and salvia.

While most landscape themes have been well studied it is slightly surprising that garden historians have written little about these highly distinctive, much viewed landscapes. It is hard to explain such historical neglect as carpet bedding has been well documented and analysed. But perhaps these quirky landscapes have been perceived in some quarters as a form of horticultural kitsch, reflective of an earlier artistic aesthetic. But like the recent interest in garden gnomes—now sanctioned by Chelsea Flower Show—there is hope for a revival of interest in these intricate, technologically inspired, floral landscapes.

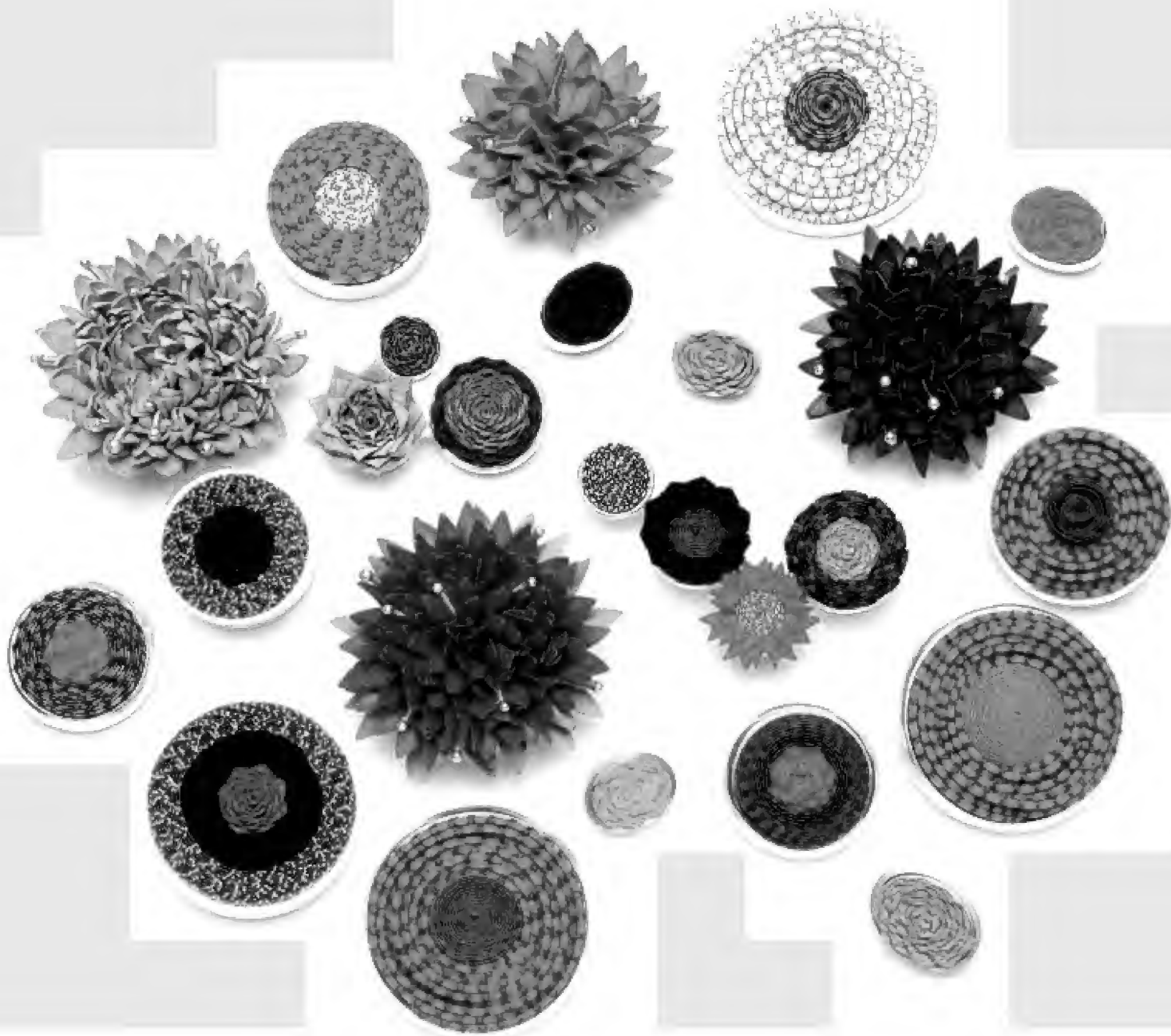
**Silas Clifford-Smith** is a Sydney-based horticulturist, art historian, and writer with a special interest in the interwar period. He blogs as The Reflective Gardener and is the author of *Percy Lindsay: artist and bohemian* (2011).



Recent photograph of the floral clock in the King's Domain, Melbourne.

Courtesy Silas Clifford-Smith





Vicki Mason

## *The garden as adornable art*

Moving on from bouquets and sprays to the suburban plot, an artist finds rich pickings in her own Melbourne neighbourhood.

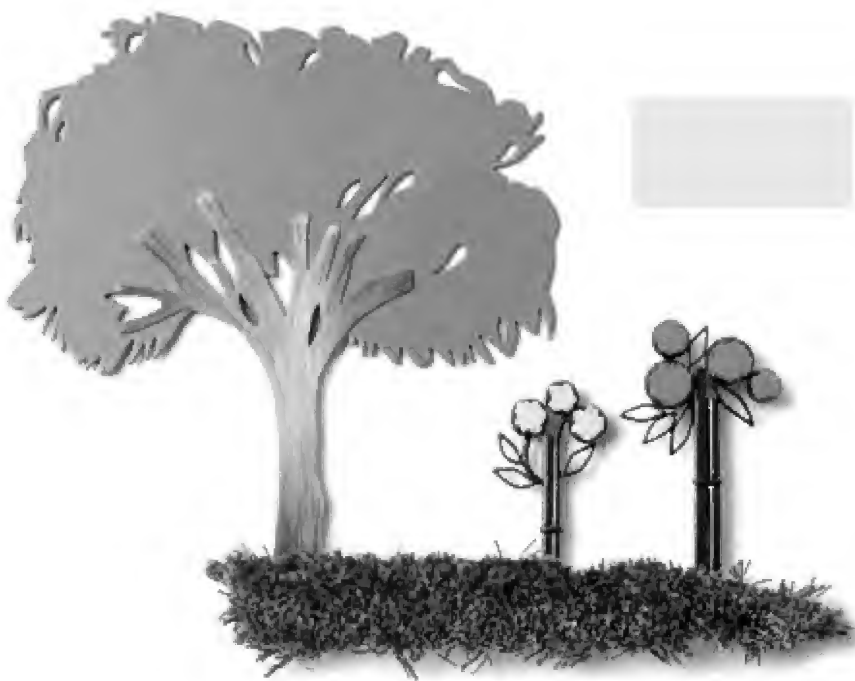
Artists often gravitate to particular subjects and my work is generated by my passion for plants. My interest in the garden as a subject is more recent but it has been gestating for many years, perhaps attributable in part, to my great grandfather Thomas Mason, a respected horticulturist in New Zealand. His beautiful

gardens in Wellington were often a topic of conversation when I spent time with my aunts, who like everyone else in the family were—and still are—keen gardeners. As a child growing up in rural New Zealand I was surrounded by plants and loved traipsing around the gardens of family and friends.

I work as a contemporary jeweller, a rich field yet difficult to define. Contemporary jewellery differs from mass-produced high street jewellery. Damian Skinner's definition from his text,

The series *Offshoot* (2007) of botanically inspired brooches kick-started a budding interest in an investigation of the garden as a subject for my work.

Photo: Terence Bogue



Works from the *Vignettes* series: The Big Tree, Standard Roses (pink and red), Welcome Mat Lawn, 2013 (above); Strappy, 2013 (below).  
Photos: Andrew Barcham

*Contemporary Jewelry in Perspective*, 2013, gives a succinct definition that sums up this discipline: 'Contemporary jewelry is a self-reflexive studio craft practice that is oriented to the body'.

Imagery and motifs of botanical origin have a long history within jewellery's imagery and so form a rich source for reinterpretation and investigation for contemporary makers. Over the many years that I've worked with plant imagery I've come to realise that gardens as a subject in themselves are also a rich vein for investigation, one that I've unconsciously been moving towards. When I look, for example, at an image of a series of brooches made in 2007, I had them photographed as a collection (as opposed each being shot individually, a usual practice) to reflect the idea of plants in a garden. When completing postgraduate studies recently I created a series of works photographed in similar clusters, homage to the mixed accumulation of plants used on many Australian colonial epergnes and a reflection of my own suburban garden where gifted plants sit alongside those of my own choosing.

**Opposite:** Images of Notting Hill front gardens used as source material and inspiration for the *Vignettes* series of works.  
Photos: Vicki Mason

My most recent body of work, created for a solo exhibition in 2013 at Craft in Melbourne, was titled *Vignettes from a suburban front yard*. Inspired by plants used in ordinary front gardens within my own residential suburb of Notting Hill, a middle-ring suburb of Melbourne, I felt these modest gardens had a story to tell. This snapshot was a way of understanding this post-war suburb's ongoing and ever changing garden history and of understanding my place within in it.

My *Vignettes* reflect the plants and gardens of a suburb that originated in the post-war period, the estate being subdivided for settlement in the late 1950s. While some of those original gardens remain, others reflect styles popular in subsequent decades. Today many of the original quarter-acre blocks are being subdivided for infill housing or having one huge house built on them as older stock seemingly comes to its 'use by' date. Tiny template-style gardens, where little lawns, iceberg roses, box hedges, and small shrubs (to name just some elements) seem to be the new norm. In *Australia's Quarter Acre*, author Peter Timms talks about many Australian suburban front gardens having an 'open aspect', a quality inherited from British garden writer J.C. Loudon. This open character lives on in the plots in my neck of the woods.

From my collected primary source material in the form of sketches and photographs, I selected plants and garden planting styles that amused me (like the plant clipped into the shape of a Halloween pumpkin, or the bare pomegranate plant with fake flowers twisted round its branches observed one winter), ones I saw repeated often (for example the trend to plant standard roses in rows), and ones that I felt would make for visually interesting work be it beautiful, textural or colourful. Once I really observed carefully, I found this quotidian landscape—often seen as





homogeneous and uninteresting—full of rich differences.

The jewellery comprising my *Vignettes* was hung on the gallery wall in conjunction with architectural cut outs of housing stock of various eras which sought to locate and give context to the work. The large eucalypts in the neighbourhood interested me more than the elms, oaks, and liquidambars. I was, for instance, interested to know why huge native Australian trees existed in the suburb. A neighbour suggested drought in the area in the mid-1960s contributed to the planting of many native trees at that time. The influence of the ‘native plant movement’ and ‘bush gardens’, where the desire to live amongst naturalistic bushland was fashionable, may also have been a contributing factor. My response to these majestic trees resulted in *The Big Tree* pendant. I chose to situate this work next to another titled *Magnolia Tree* in the gallery as a way of commenting on both the changing nature of the housing stock over time (the magnolia tree fronts a massive new house and tiny garden) and also the tree selections in gardens over the suburb’s sixty- to seventy-year history. Homeowners don’t seem to be planting large trees here anymore. Perhaps they wonder if roots of large trees will affect foundations or drainage lines; and spreading canopies affecting neighbourly relations are of concern to householders here today.

I was also interested in the various types of lawns that carpet the suburb. The lawn seems so ingrained in our Anglo gardening heritage. In this suburb lawn appears in perfect manicured stretches, as well as in tiny strips, like soft welcome mats, fronting some of the new housing, through to fake turf patches rolled out as instant garden, shining in the sun in front of solid brick

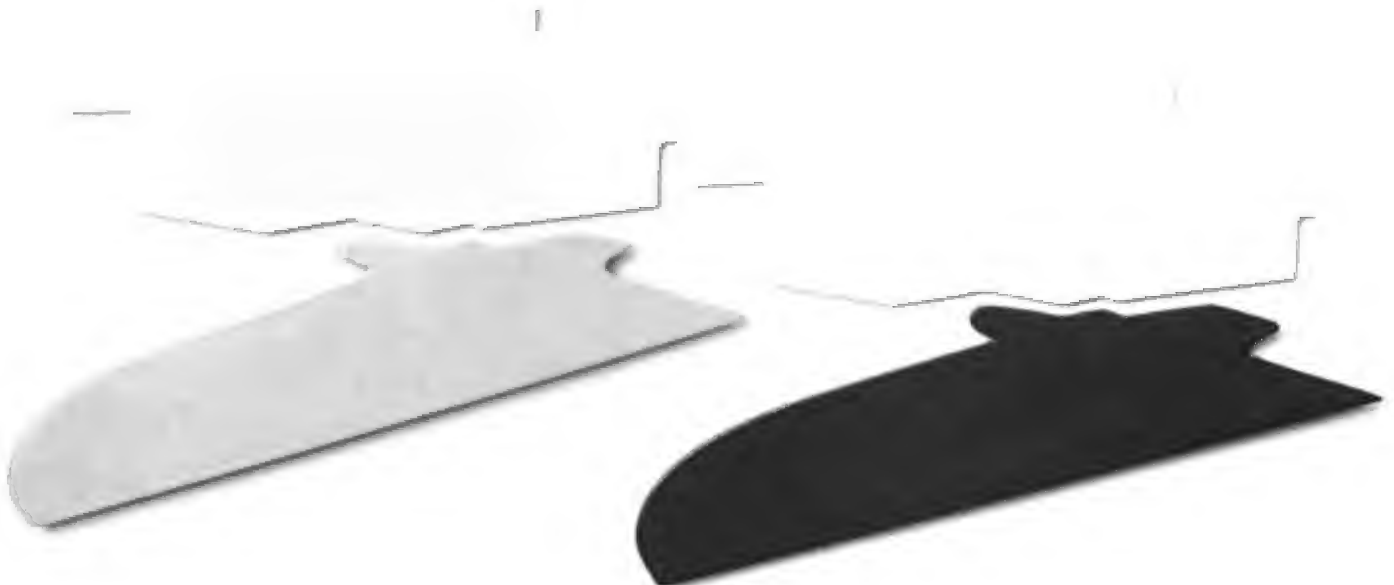
homes. *Clipped and Neat* echoes the lawns stretching out in front of houses like swathes of fabric, stretches of cool green melding house and garden. Brown and green versions talk to the idea of the lawn in a country like Australia.

I’m not sure what happens when ideas about plants and ordinary gardens become a reality in the form of an artefact for the body. It certainly encourages us to look at and think about the original places differently. By this, I mean in a less judgemental way. Instead of reflecting the tradition of picturing the suburbs as cultural voids—ingrained by critics such as Robin Boyd, Barry Humphries, and John Brack—it views these places with the same richness that Howard Arkley captured in his art. Perhaps in capturing a snapshot of these capricious landscapes and their plants, and embodying them in miniature forms, enables us to hold and wear these worlds and in doing so, possess a time and space that will ultimately pass.

The gardens explored in *Vignettes* reflect tamed garden traditions passed down family lines or conform or adapt to cultural expectations of what a garden should look like in an Australian suburb, their vernacular character reflective of the fads, fashions, and mixed cultural make-up of the suburb. For me, garden plants and their histories capture something about our relationship with nature in this fast-paced technological age and I hope in future to look more closely at this fertile ground.

Works from the  
*Vignettes* series: *Clipped*  
and *Neat* (summer and  
winter), 2013.  
Photos: Andrew Barcham

**Vicki Mason** is a practising artist with a master’s degree (research) in gold and silver smithing from ANU.  
[www.vickijewel.com](http://www.vickijewel.com)







Lesley Garrett

## *Home thoughts from abroad: a new chapter in Australian gardening history*

In this interview with guerrilla gardener Steve Wheen, we see an Australian take on a new worldwide phenomenon.

Guerrilla gardening is a new worldwide phenomenon and marks a shift in the nature and intent of gardening and as such is already part of gardening history. So far, though, it has not featured strongly in Australian garden history—a puzzle as one of its internationally acclaimed practitioners is the Australian-born Steve Wheen.

Born in Canberra in 1977 into a gardening family, Steve Wheen was destined to shoot to fame worldwide with his first pothole garden, laid out on wasteland in London in spring 2010. More followed, and these tiny Arcadian gardens soon

became known throughout the world through coverage on social media, the internet, and his publication of *The Little Book of Little Gardens* (2012). Steve was promptly dubbed The Pothole Gardener attracting a strong following in countries as diverse as Germany, the USA, and India.

Once seen they are not easily forgotten, possessing a universal appeal made up of happiness, hope, innocence, and surprise, and set as they are in the grimmest of locations, usually only frequented by hurrying pedestrians texting as they walk, earphones in place and with shoulders hunched. The gardens are not designed to last—they are in fact deliberately planned to be transient and it is that very transience which carries a large part of their appeal.

Steve Wheen gets down to work overseeing the final stages of a new garden.

Photo courtesy Steve Wheen

Bird's-eye view (right)

Deckchair and TV lamp  
(opposite)

Photos courtesy Steve Wheen



Steve Wheen attended Charles Sturt University in Bathurst where he attained a Bachelors Degree in Media Studies before relocating to London to further his studies with a Masters Degree in Communications at Central Saint Martins. It was here, as part of his course work that he set about the challenge of 'redesigning something everyone hated and turning it into something that everyone could love'. The humble pothole, hated for its ugliness and despised for tripping up pedestrian and cyclist alike, filled the bill. By marrying the raw pothole with his own personal gardening history and plant knowledge, the pothole garden was born in 2010 and catapulted onto the world stage where it became a much loved arm of guerrilla gardening.

But let Steve relate his story as he related it to me when I visited him earlier this year in his London home south of the Thames.

Guerrilla gardening is gardening anywhere that is not your garden. It is a protest. But that is not what I am about—it is really turning something that is crap into something else, re-designing it, turning it from something people hated into something new, a thing that people hated a few moments ago. What if, for a few moments, I could make someone now fall in love with it?

I had always had a garden, my mother gardens, my grandfather bred the red-trumpeted daffodil, and my great grandfather a pink daffodil. As a child I had these two

little matchbox cars and they would keep me busy for hours. That miniature world lets the imagination run wild.

It was just a gradual process, a little fun at first. When I first arrived in London ten years ago the zeitgeist here was terrible, ugly potholes damaging cars and tripping people up. It has taken me a long time to find London beautiful—it was a concrete jungle. I had never lived in a big city before and it took me a long time to find it beautiful. I had to find it beautiful in a different way. It has lead me to find a parallel beauty, a new Eden.

The whole idea of the potholes is to pop people out of the present. We have secretly filmed peoples' reactions to them. Some made a big fuss of them, some walked by, 99% realised right away what they meant. Some worried they would be stolen or destroyed by cars. They are meant to be ephemeral, they are meant to bring joy to us in the moment, to act as a catalyst to let us make our own imagination run free.

So you aim to deconstruct the ugliness you see around you and reconstruct it into something that is beautiful?

Exactly.

Why do you think there have been so few potholes posted on your site from Australia?

The cities are still beautiful. They are lovely places.

I notice that you never include people in your gardens but animals have a way of getting into the picture. I once noticed a guardsman but that was it—why is this?

Well spotted! The guardsman was a present and given to me, but the people looking at the pothole are the people in the picture, a bit like Gulliver looking down at it all. The pothole is meant to work as a catalyst on their imagination and set it free to create its own story.

Where are you headed with this, what is your goal?

If there is a goal it is to spread the happiness of that moment. The ultimate goal would be to start World Pothole Day and link it to charity.

What is your day job?

I now have my own company—a project with Google Creative Maps called The Distillery of London, with a big following online where everyone wants to come on board around the potholes, even with branding. It is about other people now—people send me their photos, a little creation, something they've done in their own local area.







Clothes basket (above)  
and Telephone box  
(below).

Photos courtesy  
Steve Wheen

**Lesley Garrett** writes occasionally for *Australian Garden History* and *Australiana*. She gardens in Sydney and the New England and has a keen interest in social issues.

**Steve Wheen's** blog is at the [potholegardener.com](http://potholegardener.com) and his painstaking laying down of a garden can be viewed as a short film 'Holes of Happiness' on YouTube.com. His book *The Little Book of Little Gardens* is readily available and was reviewed in the May publication of AGHS NSW newsletter *Branchcuttings*.

When you next come home, will you favour us with a pothole?

Yes.

Can the AGHS come on board and help?

Yes.

I realise our time is up and it is time to leave Steve—just for now. I head back along the London streets with a spring in my step through air that is heady with the scent of roses over pavements where every possible plant that can find the space pushes up through the cracks. And with a mind fully catalysed: perhaps there's a pothole in me too? I can already visualise a virtual one—more a puddle really, planted with mangroves, a stingray idling in the shallows and with a yellow kayak pulled up on the shoreline and located at Mascot.

Then there's some jewellery: tiny petit point arrases of Steve's potholes worn against the heart as love tokens. It would seem that Steve has had his way with this correspondent's imagination as well, and I have had the great pleasure of being in the company of a man with an unswerving moral compass.







Damon Young

## *Journey to the centre of the turf*

Turf has a long history, suggesting comfort, ease, and luxury. What of its awkward cousin, artificial grass? It's time to rethink the meaning of this novel surface.

Modern Literature tutorial, the early 'nineties. Looking up from his yellow, handwritten lecture notes, Aziz Hakim stopped for an anecdote break. He was walking about Cambridge University, he said, with E.M. Forster. They reached a sign: *Keep Off the Grass*. 'And E.M. Forster,' remembered Hakim, 'walked across the grass'.

This was about radicalism's contempt for ordinary rules; about the quiet iconoclasm of the free mind. But packed into the tale is this: grass is worth censure. To walk upon grass—instead of cobblestones or paving—is a luxury, and a romantic one at that.



Grass is primal. In *Genesis*, as soon as there is dry land, the Lord says: 'Let the earth bring forth grass', alongside herbs and fruit trees. Socrates, in Plato's *Phaedrus*, delivers a rare paean to the Athenian countryside, including 'grass, thick enough on a gentle slope to rest your head most comfortably'. This is a common celebration: of the sacred grove outside the city, with spring, scented flowers, shading canopies, and lush grass underfoot.

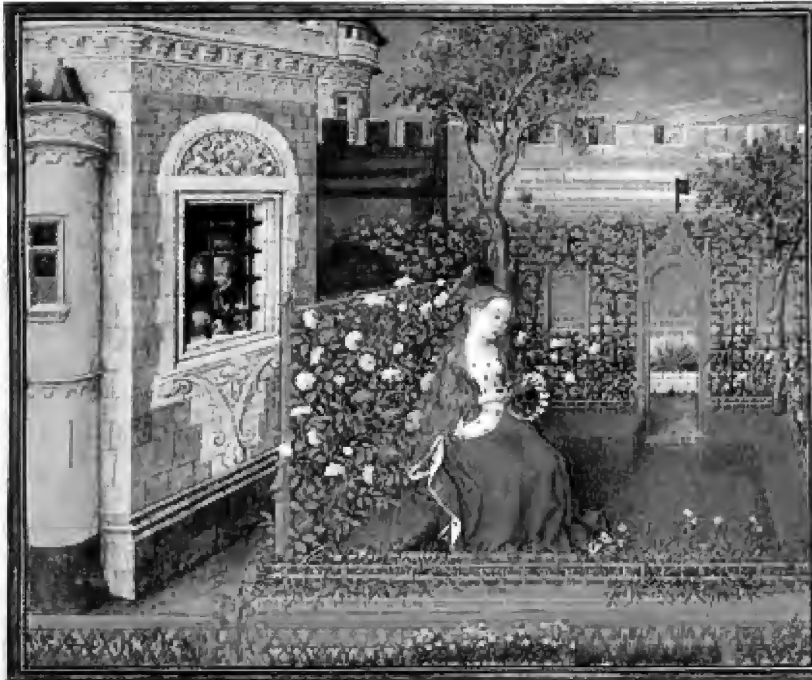
In the gospels, Jesus feeds thousands of followers with bread and fish—they all 'sit down by companies,' reads *Mark 6*, 'upon the green grass'. Grass decorated Roman villas and medieval seats: the so-called 'turf bench', often graced by virginal maidens.

This was not a lawn, of course: vistas of cut grass were for fields, not gardens. Christopher Thacker, in *The Genius of Gardening*, reports that thirteenth-century estates 'could have open grassy spaces only by laying new turf, cut from downland pasture, and beating it down firmly with mallets'.

'Keep of the grass': Bendigo Art Gallery, Victoria

Sebastian Di Mauro, 'Folly (*Themeda triandra* syn. *T. australis*)', timber, polystyrene, fibreglass, artificial grass, 2008 (RHS Abbott Bequest Fund 2008)

Photo: Richard Aitken



Not couch grass, but grass couch: the medieval turf seat. Barth lemy d'Eyck, 'Arcita and Palemone admire Emilia in her Garden', c.1460, from an illuminated manuscript of Boccaccio's *Teseida* (1339–40).  
sterreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna (Cod. 2617 Han, 53r)

Theologian Albertus Magnus, a student of Thomas Aquinas, wrote of the 'green cloth' of hammered grass, including seats so that 'men may sit down there to take their repose pleasantly when their senses need refreshment'. This tedious job continued for some five centuries.

Then technology and mobility intervened: by the end of the nineteenth century, after the invention of the mechanical mower, lawn had become common—but not vulgar. Grass retained its suggestion of idyllic comfort. It could be wild but benign, fecund but not smothering—part of a vision of what Bloomsbury author and publisher Leonard Woolf, with some irony, called 'snakeless meadows ... wildflowers, and the song of larks'.

There is labour, of course. But this is all part of the charm: turf is necessity constrained by artful freedom. This is the luxury of the Touchett estate in Henry James' *Portrait of a Lady*, with its 'delightful' afternoon tea: 'the flood of summer light had begun to ebb, the air had grown mellow, the shadows were long upon the smooth, dense turf'. Smooth *and* dense: this rhizome is thick

with fertility, yet firmly lopped and cropped by the staff. For over two thousand years, grass has accompanied civilisation as an intimation of divine blessing or proudly tamed wilderness.

Unless it is not *real* grass, but what my children call 'fake grass'. Artificial turf is novel, clever, cheap, and certainly low maintenance. But it is not grass; neither a piece of primal grace, nor proof of seemingly virtuous manual labour. It is made in a factory—usually overseas—from plastic and rubber, often including tiny pellets of recycled car tyres. (Which, according to a study by Environment and Human Health, Inc., 'increases the potential of zinc toxicity' in gardens, and might be carcinogenic.)

Originally called 'Chemgrass', artificial turf's grand entrance was in the Houston Astrodome, 1966. Designed as a less expensive playing surface for gridiron, AstroTurf is now used widely for ball sports and athletics. Some criticise its microbial count and heat (now apparently countered with TurfAide™ and AstroFlect™), as well as its lack of bounce and abrasiveness. Nonetheless, artificial turf continues to be cheaper than regularly mown, fertilised, and watered grass, as well as less vulnerable to capricious weather.

Which is, of course, the charm of fake grass in gardens. There are no athletes sprinting and tackling; no fears of final quarter dehydration or plastic burn. Aside from the health risks, artificial lawn seems perfect: James' 'smooth and dense' turf, without the Victa and daily sprinklers.

And yet, stigma remains. Part of this is tactile: artificial turf is simply not as soft and cool as the water-hungry rhizome. But it is also philosophical: it concerns, not with how the lawn feels, but with what it *means*.



Synthetic symmetries: artificial turf in the suburbs. Photo: Vicki Mason

One of the hallmarks of this age of mass production is the aura of the 'original'. If we are thronged by copies of copies, the archetype gains a kind of magical charm: authentic and primordial. In this outlook, 'fake grass' is a counterfeit: a pretence, which lacks specialness. Obviously it is as real as any other thing. But it is not *really* grass: it is a false, downgraded, gimcrack stand-in.

Alongside this fear of copies is suspicion of the mass produced: if grass is organic, fertile, manual, local, then artificial turf is mechanical, sterile, automated, globally shipped. Put simply, if grass is natural, then AstroTurf and its generic copies are *unnatural*, with all the moral baggage this hauls about.

The problem with this outlook is that 'fake grass' need not be grass at all. Yes, it was engineered to look like young, freshly mown turf. And in this, it is a so-called skeuomorph: a new design than keeps decorative parts of the old. Think of fountain pens resembling quills, computer programs with knobs and dials, cars with faux-wood panelling—each makes new technology seem friendly in its familiarity.

But artificial turf is not just fake grass—it is also real rubber and plastic. It is a unique surface, with very particular qualities. It is usually bright green and fuzzy, but it might equally be slate blue, persimmon orange, or creamy white. It can decorate chairs, walls, or bollards as easily as courtyards. It is, in other words, simply another part of a modern design toolkit.

True, we do not water and mow it ourselves—it is another example of the modern escape from manual labour. But no more so than having gardeners visit weekly, or the many other gardening products—slate tiles, treated pine fence posts, stainless steel chains,



Victorian lamps—we regularly buy from others. (And which are also mass produced.)

The point is not that the synthetic lawn is a wonderful decoration in every garden; that we can do away with plants altogether. (As I note in *Philosophy in the Garden*, the garden is valuable partly because of its vivid fusion of humanity and nature.) And clearly there are aesthetic issues alongside those of health and comfort.

The point is that artificial turf can be a bona fide decorative choice. And it can be chosen, not simply because it is cheap or easy to maintain: a second-rate version of The Real Thing. It can add novel texture, colour, and shape to an overall design. It is not a romantic luxury, true—not worthy of EM Forster's iconoclasm. But sometimes the radicalism is in the garden itself, not in the decision to stroll over it.

Medieval dreams:  
artificial turf at  
Federation Square,  
Melbourne.  
Photo: Damon Young



Dr Damon Young is a philosopher, and the author of several popular nonfiction books, including *Philosophy in the Garden*, recently published in Australia and overseas. [www.damonyoung.com.au](http://www.damonyoung.com.au)



Elizabeth Anya-Petrivna

## Wearing the garden

Assemblage of nineteenth-century artificial flowers, instruction manuals, flower-making equipment, and documentation: essential accoutrements to an informed understanding of contemporary dress fashion.

Photo: Richard Aitken

Floral motifs in dress fashion have a long history; less well known is the way these were used collectively in the nineteenth century to represent contemporary garden fashions.

In the years either side of 1860 British newspapers circulated a mischievous pun—‘An artificial florist lately described himself as “head gardener” to the ladies’—originally published in *Punch’s Almanack*. The quip was evidently popular, for it was republished over twenty times in different regional centres across England and Scotland.

Similar jokes, found in the same newspapers, tally less than half this number of reprints. It was a good joke evidently, good enough for a revival twenty years later when it was republished in Australian papers. What was it about this one-liner that so amused mid-century minds?

This image of the garden corresponding with dress fashion and artificial flowers was a common enough refrain, exhumed whenever the flower was again ascendant in fashion. Flowers were worn on little toques and bonnets to the opera and theatre, in the hair by draping and curling amongst chignons and frizz, carried in posy holders, and swathed across the body in swags throughout the nineteenth century.

Commentators, and in particular the press, found the metaphor of the decorated female body as a garden irresistible. Uncomplicated, it appears to have easily elicited a response or provoked a trite metaphor. The sight of a ball hosted at the Melbourne Town Hall ‘was like a parterre of flowers waving in the wind’. This 1885 description referred to the posies and garlands worn by dancing women but also to the regimental

A fashionable party from *Godey’s Lady’s Book* (Philadelphia, 1859) showing floral decoration combining with garden elements such as trelliswork.

Courtesy Elizabeth Anya-Petrivna





uniforms and the formal geometry of the dancers. The entire ensemble and scene was a garden made of bodies, colours, and vegetation.

This evocation of the parterre found a continental echo in *la Belle Époque*, recounted in the 1930s by couturier Paul Poiret in his autobiography. 'The women kept on their hats', he recalled of the theatre-going Parisians, 'they wore little bonnets with or without strings and plaited with velvet flowers, Parma violets or geraniums'. 'Then, the *parterre* really was a flower garden' he added, cleverly conflating the French term for a theatre audience with a garden style.

Fashion plates of the mid to late 1880s depict trails of vines and greenery dotted with blooms winding through the swags and drapery of

*tournures* (bustles) down toward the train or dotted around the skirts, sometimes trailing from the corsage like a climbing plant. Skirts were crosshatched to resemble a trellis, with vines and growing flowers, like the convolvulus, encircling skirts. The corsage had become a metonym for the bouquet pinned to the shoulder, when it was once commonly known to embrace the entire bodice.

The flower had long been a popular design motif, with a rich and evocative history, equally revered in Australia as other parts of the world. Victoria's colonial history of boom-and-bust demonstrated this correlation with flower fashions and how they were manifest locally—often in the form of artificial flowers, a French specialty. The first flower maker in the colony was an un-named

Few anthropomorphised the garden and its denizens as skilfully as French caricaturist J.J. Grandville—here shears and secateurs run amok amongst the hawthorn (Aub pine) in his *Les Fleurs Animées* (Paris, 1847).  
Courtesy Elizabeth Anya-Petrivna





Artificial flower bouquet from the self-published book by 'Artiste to Her Majesty' Emma Peachey, *The Royal Guide to Wax Flower Modelling* (London, 1851).  
Courtesy Elizabeth Anya-Petrivna

craftswoman who crossed Bass Strait in the early 1840s to open a workshop in Melbourne Town, but her enterprise failed because of a lack of custom and she returned to Van Diemens Land in 1848. Contemporaneously, diarist and artist, Georgiana McCrae received a box of supplies from her family in Scotland. The parcel included artificial flowers that she was able to sell for quick money during a time of economic depression and personal hardship.

Importation was the main means of distribution of artificial flowers in the colony, but small craft workshops began to operate in Melbourne from the 1860s onwards. Most of these workshops were located in the arcades of the city and produced decorative flowers for the drawing room as well as for the bonnet. The Sargood family (later of Rippon Lea fame), when starting their trade enterprise, advertised stridently in the early 1850s that a new shipment of artificial flowers had arrived, the font size bold and larger than surrounding announcements for other drapery goods. Artificial flowers were evidently in great colonial demand and as a successful business the firm continued to import French, English, and German flowers, eventually in the 1900s devoting an entire floor of its Flinders Lane emporium to flowers and millinery trim.

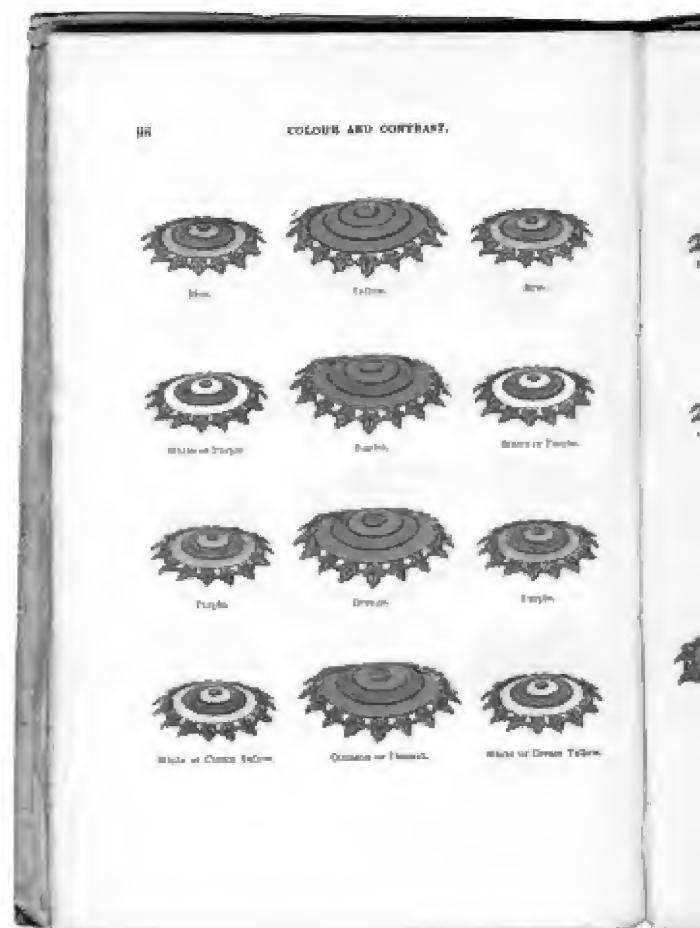
Garden, interior, and body merge: Floral table arrangements from T.C. March, *Flower and Fruit Decoration* (London, 1862).  
Private collection

Carpet bedding from Robert Thompson, *The Gardener's Assistant* (London, 1890).  
Private collection

Presenting a posy, from an undated nineteenth-century chromolithograph  
Courtesy Elizabeth Anya-Petrivna

A similarity is evident between flowers worn as dress adornment with fashions in garden design. From the 1830s to the late 1860s, for instance, wax coronets for the hair were styled geometrically and fresh flowers were contrived into concentric circles. These patterns aligned with contemporary garden and flower arranging fashions, with overtones of the gardenesque and derived from formal floral bedding. The popular geometric revival of the 1840s, with an interest in terraces around the house studded with flower beds in cut turf, went hand-in-hand with the gardenesque, a term coined by J.C. Loudon in 1832, to elevate gardening alongside the sister arts such as architecture, painting, and sculpture. By the time of Edward Kemp's *How to Lay Out a Garden* (1858 & 1864 editions), the concept had widened to refer more generally to the art of the garden, with a particular focus on geometry and order. This mode was also known as the 'dressed garden'.

As garden styles changed so too did decisions about how to wear flowers as decorative. As more picturesque and naturalistic garden styles evolved so too free-form sprays and naturalistic drapes of flowers become fashionable. They even drooped, replicating the soft decay of petals, a conceit that often caused the local press to remark on the



singularity of this novelty. Again the Sargood emporium was selling the latest fashion in partially limp artificial flowers. Shop windows of milliners and artificial flower retailers on Collins Street were described as ‘gardens’, with churchgoers stopping to admire the display. Yet despite the seeming moral rectitude and edification proffered by the natural world, the artificial flower was often singled out as inferior—both as church decoration and on the bosom of the virtuous. With forthright Protestant American vigour, essayist and moral reformer Julia McNair Wright claimed in *The Complete Home* (1879) that only the fresh flower was the virtuous form of decoration.

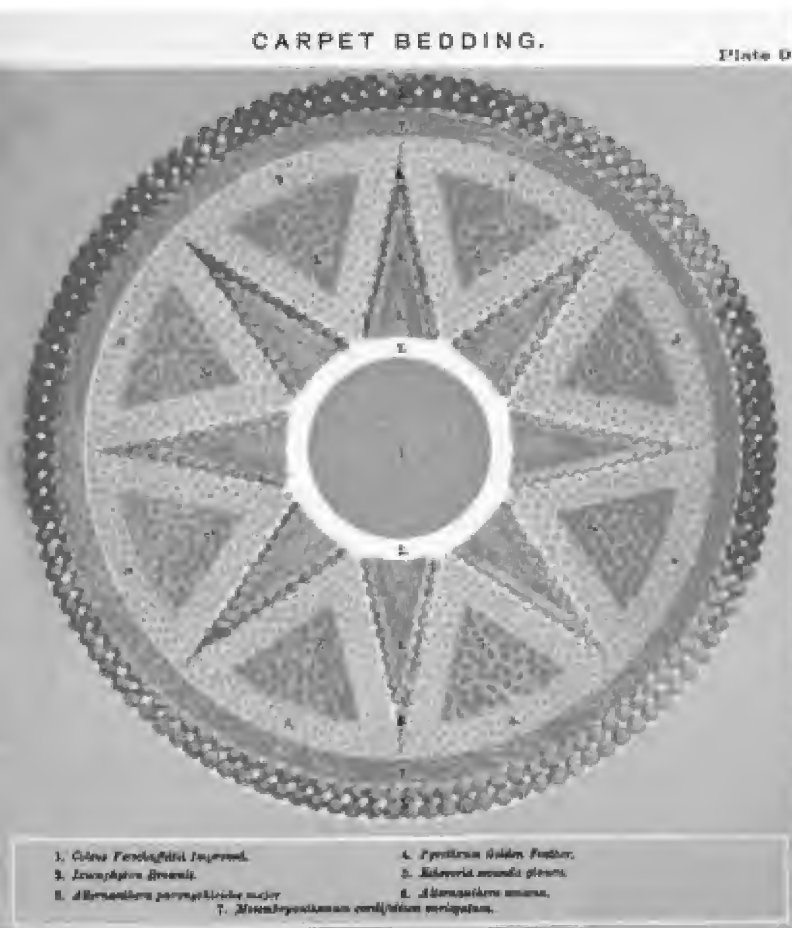
The excesses of late Victorian fashion for vegetation and leafy plants of the hot house—read exotic and decadent—were often seen in the interior through bamboo and *japonisme* motifs in self-figured silk patterns, naturalistic garden settings, and a fashion for flower arrangements of one species and colour of flower amongst its own foliage or a garnish of fern, simulating a naturally potted plant. The blooming singularity of the flower was replaced with the stylistic geometry of the frond and leaf. The ostrich feather, echoing the shape of the palm frond or branching leaf, increasingly replaced flowers in costume. Although both feather and flower had long been

used together on hats and bonnets, depending on the month, in its cyclical proclamations, Melbourne’s *Table Talk* advised that flowers were ‘out’ and feathers ‘in’.

Melbournians eagerly participated in the fashion for flowers, whether purchased commercially or made domestically. And when comparing dress and garden fashion, ‘wearing the garden’, or indeed drawing from its features—such as the trellis, parterre, and garden bed geometry—can be clearly apprehended. The natural world, so evident in the decorative and plastic arts, was a fashionable yet simple decorative motif. It was repeated endlessly and worn over the entire body, but perhaps not often to this extreme (breathlessly described by *Table Talk* in 1886):

A NOVEL ‘rose dress’ has been made for an American belle who wished for a toilet composed entirely of flowers. The skirt is made [of] roses of different hues, and rosebuds complete the bodice, while a veil of tulle, spotted with crystal is thrown over the dress to imitate morning dew.

Elizabeth Anya-Petrivna is curator for the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) and is currently completing postgraduate study in the history of artificial flowers at RMIT.





## *Victor Crittenden OAM (1925–2014)*

Victor Crittenden in his official role as College Librarian of the Canberra College of Advanced Education (1980) and in retirement in his Canberra home (2010).

Photo (left) courtesy University of Canberra; photo (right): Roslyn Burge

Victor Crittenden was one of Australia's most unobtrusive yet influential garden historians, not for his own writings but primarily as the compiler and publisher of an indispensable history and bibliography of Australian garden books.

In our tribute, we turn first to Roslyn Burge who interviewed Victor Crittenden in October 2010 for the AGHS Oral History Project:

Victor was born in Newcastle, the middle child, with a younger sister with whom he was very close, and a brother three years older whom he never really knew, who died of meningitis in 1927. Victor's grandfather was a bullock driver, away from home for long periods of time and his father's older brother took over the fathering role in the family. Like many families immediately after the war, Victor's brother was named for his uncle who was killed at the Battle of Beersheba a decade earlier. Victor's mother was shattered by the death of her son, soon followed by the Depression and financial loss for the Crittenden family, who moved to Quirindi, just south of Tamworth, in 1931.

There, and when the family moved to the Sydney suburb of Ashbury just before the Second World War, his mother grew roses. With his father away at war, his mother established a large vegetable garden in the backyard where there were also fruit trees, a large pepper tree, and a Queensland wattle. The front garden had a buffalo lawn—the mowing of which gave Victor a lifelong aversion to mowing—and a couple of little garden beds. Growing up, Victor wanted to be an architect, and remembered building model and mud houses in the garden—and he always included gardens surrounding the model houses.

With various moves, schooling was interrupted but Victor grew up 'indoctrinated with the idea of going to university'. Both parents came from Maitland and his mother was one of nine children in a family where educating the boys was the first priority. Despite that ambition Victor left school after fourth year to bring money into the house because his father had problems with his war injuries. Victor worked in the soft furnishings section of the city warehouse, Sargood Gardiners. At lunchtime he would meander through bookstores, or Selfridges where there was a plant section where plants were



bought in little bundles, or the roots of roses were wrapped in cloth. In 1943, when Victor turned 18, he joined the Army and gardened collectively, if briefly, when accommodated at St Ives Showground.

Victor later qualified as a librarian in Toronto and returned to Australia to the University of New England Library. His first house in Armidale was a charming 1880s cottage on a double block, with the remnants of a garden and a number of plum trees. Victor restored first the house and then the garden, all his work based on studying gardening books: it was in Armidale that Victor began his garden book collection with his purchase of Mrs Rolf Boldrewood's *The Flower Garden in Australia* (1893).

In 1968 he was appointed foundation College Librarian at the new Canberra College of Advanced Education. In Canberra he became a familiar figure in the National Library of Australia's Petherick Reading Room, working on his bibliography of Australian gardening books. Recalling the beginnings of the Australian Garden History Society in 1980, Victor remembered his enthusiasm: 'you couldn't hold me back'.

Nancy Clark, ACT representative on the AGHS National Management Committee, traces Victor's contribution to the Australian Garden History Society:

In 1980 Victor attended the conference of garden history enthusiasts in Melbourne at which it was agreed to form the Australian Garden History Society and was thus a foundation member. In 1986 the Canberra (ACT, Monaro, and Riverina) Branch of the Society was established and having just retired, Victor was deeply involved in the Branch, becoming its first Treasurer and later President, remaining on the Committee until 1999.

These early years in the Branch were ones of energy, cooperative effort, and much conviviality. A program of talks and garden visits was established and Victor was an enthusiastic leader or member of all. The program expanded to include weekend excursions and seminars across and beyond the Branch boundaries—to the Monaro, the Riverina, the Blue Mountains, Bathurst and Orange, the South Coast—and the first surveys of some local historic gardens were undertaken. These grew into a series of booklets that record the history, design, and plantings of several local gardens. In 1994 a workshop conducted in Victor's garden to provide practical training in garden measurement led to the publication by the AGHS of Richard Ratcliffe's seminal booklet *Recording Gardens*.

In the mid-1990s the Branch was engaged in what was probably its most passionate work of advocacy—the (failed) attempt to save the

woodland garden of the recently deceased National Librarian (Sir Harold White), an attempt that ended in 1997 with an appeal from the AGHS to the ACT Administrative Appeals Tribunal, arguing that the garden's heritage classification should be reinstated. Years later Victor spoke bitterly of this failure: 'We fought tooth and nail to save [it]. We didn't get anywhere because the government organisations were opposed. We got it registered, but they didn't enforce the registration ... We actually had a court case over it. The Garden History Society fighting the case.'

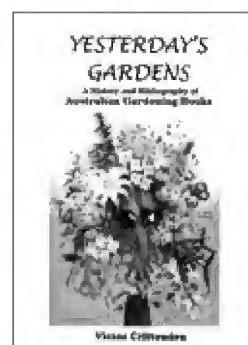
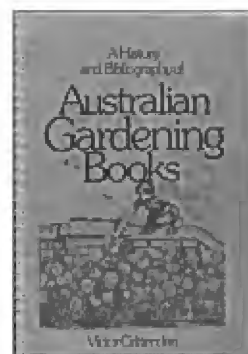
A strong individualist, Victor was also a member of the Society's National Management Committee from 1989 to 1992, firmly representing the views of his local branch, and making his mark when he felt the Society was diverging from the right path. He was clear—the Society should not be a horticultural society dedicated to the history of plants, nor yet a society for professional landscape gardeners. He remained convinced that it should be a group of enthusiasts: for him the garden was essentially 'a personal thing'.

Ian Morrison, Allport Librarian (acting) in the Tasmanian Archive & Heritage Office, was one of Victor's young colleagues—a fellow bibliographer, book historian, and small press publisher. He notes that:

Victor's writing and publishing activities made an important contribution to Australian studies. His Mulini Press produced a stream of bibliographies, indexes, monographs, and print-on-demand editions of nineteenth-century Australian literature, not just raising awareness but making the obscure and long forgotten readily accessible for a moderate price. The Mulini Press monographic series 'Bibliographica Historica Australiae', for instance, began in 1991, provided an outlet for scholarly work in Australian book history that would otherwise have struggled to find a commercial publisher.

In the mid-1990s Victor took over publication of the journal *Margin*, which had begun life at Monash University in the early 1970s, its title derived from the acronym 'Monash Australiana Research Group Informal Notes'. He also produced *ANCLIP*, an occasional catalogue of 'Australian nineteenth century literature in print', listing Mulini Press publications as well as the output of other academic and commercial publishers. Victor was an enthusiastic researcher, but his reputation rests on his activities as a small press publisher.

Fellow bibliophile and garden historian Richard Clough knew Victor well through shared interests and time together in Canberra:



Every serious Australian garden history researcher owes a debt to Victor Crittenden although they may not realise it. Originally, working alone, he produced a bibliography of Australian garden books that has become one of the foundations from which the discipline has developed. Up to the time of its publication my main interest had been the history of Asian architecture and gardens, but acquiring a copy I concentrated in following in his footsteps trying to find copies of all the works he had listed, and if possible finding additional titles. Our rivalry was always friendly. His bibliography soon became the most used book in my collection, falling to pieces and only kept together by being tied with tape. It led me to concentrating on the study of gardening in Australia, something for which I have been grateful to Victor ever since.

I had first met Victor soon after Roger Johnson established the School of Environmental Design at the Canberra College of Advanced Education. As an admirer of Roger and a supporter of his approach to landscape education I wanted to help by making my collection of reference books available to his students. Victor, as foundation Librarian of the College, became responsible for their transfer and we met and found we shared similar interests. From then on we became friends—not close friends, as he always kept you at a distance—and we saw each other frequently, especially during Nance Irvine's lifetime. She was a close friend of Victor and shared his interest in the First Fleet. Garden history is only one of the fields where he made a significant contribution and where he will be missed.

#### Select list of books of garden history interest written, edited, or published by Victor Crittenden

- 1978:** Louisa Atkinson, *A Voice from the Country*, Mulini Press, Canberra, 1978.
- 1979:** Victor Crittenden, *The Front Garden: the story of the cottage garden in Australia*, Mulini Press, Canberra, 1979.
- 1980:** Victor Crittenden (ed.), *Australia's First Gardening Guide of 1806: Observations on Gardening by George Howe*, Mulini Press, Canberra, 1994.
- 1980:** Louisa Atkinson, *Excursions From Berrima and a Trip to Manaro and Molonglo in the 1870's*, Mulini Press, Canberra, 1980.
- 1981:** Victor Crittenden, *A Bibliography of the First Fleet*, Australian National University Press, Canberra, London, & Miami, FL, 1981.
- 1981:** Enid Isaacs, *Sufficient Wonder: on flowers in wild places*, Mulini Press, Canberra, 1981.
- 1982:** Victor Crittenden, *An Autumn Visit: historic gardens in Sydney and the Blue Mountains*, Mulini Press, Canberra, 1982.
- 1983:** John Gelding, *Three Sydney Garden Nurseries in the 1860's*, Mulini Press, Canberra, 1983.
- 1984:** Edna Walling, *On the Trail of Australian Wildflowers*, Mulini Press, Canberra, 1984.
- 1985:** Lionel Gilbert, *William Woolfs, 1814–1893: 'A Most Useful Colonist'*, Mulini Press, Canberra, 1985.
- 1986:** Victor Crittenden, *A History of Australian Gardening Books and Bibliography 1806–1950*, Canberra College of Advanced Education Library, Belconnen, ACT, 1986.
- 1986:** Victor Crittenden (ed.), *A Catalogue of Landscape Architecture: the Richard Clough Collection*, Canberra College of Advanced Education Library, Belconnen, ACT, 1986.
- 1987:** D.H. Borchardt & Victor Crittenden (eds), *Australians: a guide to sources*, Fairfax, Syme & Weldon Associates, Broadway, NSW, 1987.
- 1987:** Phyl Frazer Simons, *Historic Tasmanian Gardens*, Mulini Press, Canberra, 1987.
- 1990:** Jean Galbraith, *Doongalla Restored: the story of a garden*, Mulini Press, Canberra, 1990.
- 1992:** Victor Crittenden, *A Shrub in the Landscape of Fame: Thomas Shepherd*, Australian landscape gardener and nurseryman, Mulini Press, Canberra, 1992.
- 1994:** [Daniel Bunce], *1836 Catalogue of Seeds and Plants, Indigenous and Exotic, Cultivated and on Sale at Denmark Hill Nursery*, New Town Road, Hobart Town, Mulini Press, Canberra, 1994.
- 1995:** Mrs Rolf Boldrewood, *The Flower Garden in Australia*, (Melbourne, 1893), Mulini Press, Canberra, 1995.
- 1996:** Marcus Clark, *About Gardens and Flowers*, Mulini Press, Canberra, 1996.
- 1998:** Richard Ratcliffe, *Recording gardens: a guide to measuring and drawing gardens based on an Australian Garden History Society seminar*, Australian Garden History Society in association with Mulini Press, Canberra, 1998.
- 1999:** Louisa Johnson, *Every Lady Her Own Flower Gardener: addressed to the industrious and the economical*, (London, 1839), Mulini Press, Canberra, 1999.
- 2000:** Lionel Gilbert, *Mr McLeay's Elizabeth Bay Garden: plants, privilege and power in Sydney's early scientific community*, Mulini Press, Canberra, 2000.
- 2001:** *A Gardening Poem of 1809: General Instructions in Gardening, Agriculture and the Care of Sheep*, [with an] introduction by Richard Clough, Mulini Press, Canberra, 2001.
- 2002:** Victor Crittenden, *Yesterday's Gardens: a history and bibliography of Australian gardening books*, Mulini Press, Canberra, 2002.

We are grateful to Roslyn Burge, Nancy Clark, Ian Morrison, and Richard Clough for so generously sharing in this tribute to their colleague, contributed at very short notice—Eds.

# For the bookshelf

Pacita Alexander, *My Dearest Ellen: letters from 'Mrs Rolf Boldrewood' to Ellen Foreman 1851–1905*, The Oaks Historical Society, Picton, NSW, [2013] (ISBN 9780975824047): paperback, 120pp, RRP \$20 plus \$5 postage (available from [www.oaksheritagecentre.com](http://www.oaksheritagecentre.com))

In 1999, while undertaking a three-year long survey of colonial gardens across the Cumberland Plain and Camden with Geoffrey Britton, one of our most memorable visits was to Ellensville, Mount Hunter, which was a relatively unknown garden compared to some of its nearby neighbours such as Brownlow Hill and Glenmore House. There was the unexpected surprise of Ellensville's magical location, reached by the switch back road like a step back in time, its sprawling flowering cactus, graceful agave, and simple layout. But what was more memorable was Pacita Alexander's love of the history of the place and her enriched telling of the familial connections with other properties we had surveyed. Like an invisible web these complex connections spread out across the Cowpastures, linking people and places. To the garden historian these links conjure images of plant swapping. What appear to be coincidences in design and planting palette become tangible connections. Pacita spoke of a tin of letters.

For social and garden historians letters between friends are among the most wonderful resources we can find. Through these we can really understand what people chose to grow from among what was on offer in the nursery catalogues. Letters give life to gardens past. They are of even greater interest when they are written by someone as important for Australian garden history as Margaret Browne, the first woman to write a book on gardening in Australia, written under the name Mrs Rolf Boldrewood.

Margaret Browne (*née* Riley) grew up at Denham Court, Ingleburn, which had a prominent colonial garden. Her letters were written to the much older woman, Ellen Foreman (*née* Moore), who lived with her parents at Raby and later established Ellensville, Mount Hunter. Pacita Alexander has now transcribed and collated those letters in *My Dearest Ellen*. This is a very personal history, which shows the ties between the colonial properties of the Cumberland Plain and hints of the influence of those places on the shared joys of gardening.

**Colleen Morris**

Annette Giesecke & Naomi Jacobs (eds), *Earth Perfect? Nature, utopia and the garden*, Black Dog Publishing, London, 2012 (ISBN 9781907317750): paperback, 306pp, RRP US\$39.95

As a collection of essays originating from a conference of the Society for Utopian Studies, *Earth Perfect?* presents an interdisciplinary perspective on gardens read through utopian thinking. The methods, propositions, and perspectives presented within it speak to the significance of gardens to our human condition. The literal no-place of imagined utopia is realised in this book, as it calls for acknowledging utopian vision within the long-term health of the world's ecosystems and communities.

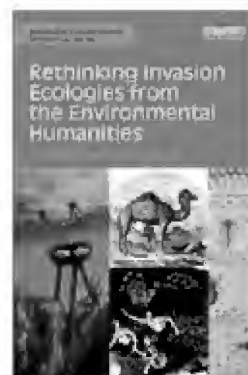
This is certainly a position taken by Botanic Gardens of Adelaide director Stephen Forbes, the sole Australian contributor. Forbes' essay, in its definition of the botanic garden through a consideration of various knowledge paradigms, echoes themes found throughout the book. Forbes traces the history of a collection model based on an 'enquiry into plants', emphasising relationships between people, plants, and culture. His argument places the contemporary botanic garden at the centre of utopian vision promoting ecological literacy and environmental reconciliation that is vital for humanity.

Each essay within this book is beautifully illustrated and wide-ranging in its sources. Methodological approaches and bibliographies fluidly move through literary, artistic, and scholarly sources. Written within an academic model, the book calls for a concentrated reader with an open approach to the garden form. It demonstrates the strength and productive nature of collaborations between fields of practice using a loose definition of the garden as a common denominator.

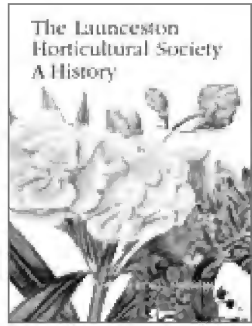
**Jess Hood**

Jodi Frawley & Iain McCalman (eds), *Rethinking Invasion Ecologies from the Environmental Humanities*, Routledge, Oxford & New York, 2014 (ISBN 9780415716567 / 9780415716574) hardback/paperback, 288pp, RRP £90/£27.99 [Routledge Environmental Humanities series]

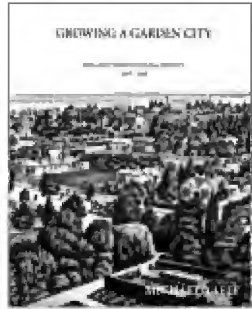
*Rethinking Invasion Ecologies from the Environmental Humanities* draws together a collection of essays from international and Australian scholars. The central idea that ties them together is the notion that the humanities can offer fresh perspectives on invasion ecologies by drawing on



# For the bookshelf



the complex cultural and social dimensions of these systems. This approach seeks to bridge the nature/culture divide, an area that the traditional single disciplinary approach has struggled to illuminate. This is an important work for garden historians interested in finding new frontiers in their research. It invites readers to explore cutting-edge ideas or frames of reference such as the Anthropocene, resilience, global change, and bioregionality.



A number of chapters have particular relevance to garden historians including 'Landscapes of the Anthropocene: from dominion to dependence?' In this Eric Pawson and Andreas Aagaard Christensen explore the increasing force of humans in landscape change. Lesley Head's 'Living in a weedy future: insights from the garden' will be of particular interest to historians considering the role of escaped exotics 'jumping the garden fence' in the story of weeds and their impacts on Australian gardens, landscapes, and ecosystems. Other essays such as Libby Robin's 'Resilience in the Anthropocene' provide an important biography of two ideas that are currently shaping many cutting-edge histories.

If we consider garden history's role, as part of the environmental humanities, then this stunning collection of scholarly essays opens up new and fertile soils for further consideration. If we consider garden making as an environmental force that has shaped the nature of Australia then this book is an important tool for sharpening our thinking.

**Sharon Willoughby**

PhD Scholar, Fenner School, Australian National University

Gwenda Sheridan, *The Launceston Horticultural Society: a history*, Launceston Horticultural Society, Launceston, Tas., 2013 (ISBN 9780646908359): jacketed paperback, 264pp, RRP \$59.95 (available from bookshops in Launceston and Hobart)

Michael Taffe, *Growing a Garden City: Ballarat Horticultural Society 1859–2009*, BHS Publishing/Ballarat Heritage Services, Ballarat, Vic, 2014 (ISBN 9781876478162): paperback, 208pp, \$55 plus postage ([www.ballaratheritage.com.au](http://www.ballaratheritage.com.au))

From famine to feast: two substantial histories of Australian horticultural societies—each with well over a century and half of service to their members, their communities, and to horticulture—published within months of each other, and the first that I can recall since *Growing Together* (1984) by George Jones, in which the various Geelong horticultural societies formed the backbone of a pioneering

regional horticultural history. Both works have as their focus a substantial non-metropolitan city with rich surrounding agricultural and pastoral hinterland.

Launceston is the older of the two societies under consideration. Established in 1838 and maintaining more or less continuous existence, the Launceston Horticultural Society maintained the garden that later became City Park—part botanic garden, part civic showpiece—as its focus. Drawing on the substantial talents and enthusiasm of local property owners, the Society enjoyed an early flourish with shows and exhibitions before the weight of garden management became a millstone, with declining finance and membership continuing to bedevil the organisation. Despite its vicissitudes, the story is told with admirable clarity based on detailed research and extensive fieldwork by Gwenda Sheridan. In its presentation, *The Launceston Horticultural Society: a history* punches above its weight, with a marvellous selection of contemporary images drawn from a pleasing array of archival sources. This is a fine achievement by a dedicated author and scholar.

Ballarat established its horticultural society in 1859, just as the fever of the gold rushes was translating into longer-term urban improvements and a burgeoning civic pride. Like Launceston, the genesis of the Ballarat Horticultural Society was in a group of like-minded individuals banding together to share their experience and foster local horticulture. But unlike Launceston, although Ballarat Botanic Garden was a focus for local garden enthusiasts, it was not directly managed by the Society, which thereby escaped the financial pressure such management entailed. Local author Michael Taffe has done a marvellous job with his research and then in marshalling his resources. Richly illustrated and engagingly written, *Growing a Garden City* provides all that might be expected in an institutional history, with substantial appendices grouping detailed information that might otherwise clutter the main text.

Perhaps the most pleasing aspect of these two fine works is that they both use the opportunity afforded by their subject to stray well beyond parochial interests and become de facto regional garden histories. In a nation as diverse as Australia, this approach is to be applauded and hopefully emulated. Local interest will account for the majority of the sales, but those with a serious interest in Australian garden history will want both to join their copy of *Growing Together*.

**Richard Aitken**



# Recent releases

Celia Fisher, *The Medieval Flower Book*, British Library Publishing, London, 2013 (ISBN 9780712358941): paperback, 144pp, colour illustrations, RRP \$29.95

Celia Fisher, *The Golden Age of Flowers*, British Library Publishing, London, 2013 (ISBN 9780712358958): paperback, 128pp, colour illustrations, RRP \$29.95

A small cluster of sumptuously illustrated, richly detailed, yet accessible and affordable publications from the British Library has recently crossed our desks. Two of these by Celia Fisher—a scholar of fifteenth-century paintings and manuscripts who lectures and writes widely on plants and gardens in art—especially caught our attention for their likely appeal to readers with interests in botanical history and illustration, mediaeval history, art and manuscript history, flowers, and gardening.

Warwick Mayne-Wilson, *Town Parks of New South Wales: past, present and future*, The Author, [Sydney], 2014 (ISBN 9780987537904): paperback, 232pp, RRP \$50 plus postage (available from [warwick@maynewilson.com.au](mailto:warwick@maynewilson.com.au))

Now back in print, in a greatly expanded edition, this is an indispensable guide to the history and heritage of the many urban parks of New South Wales. Described by the author as the ‘final edition’, get in quick to secure your piece of this rich history.

Robert Riddel, *Robin Dods 1868–1920: selected works*, Uro, [Melbourne], 2012 (ISBN 9780987228116): hardback, 200pp, RRP \$75 (available from [uromedia.com.au](http://uromedia.com.au))

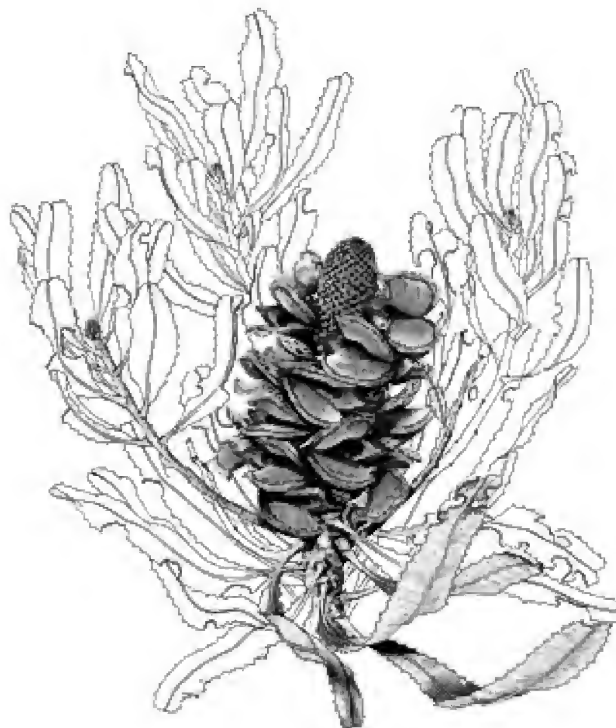
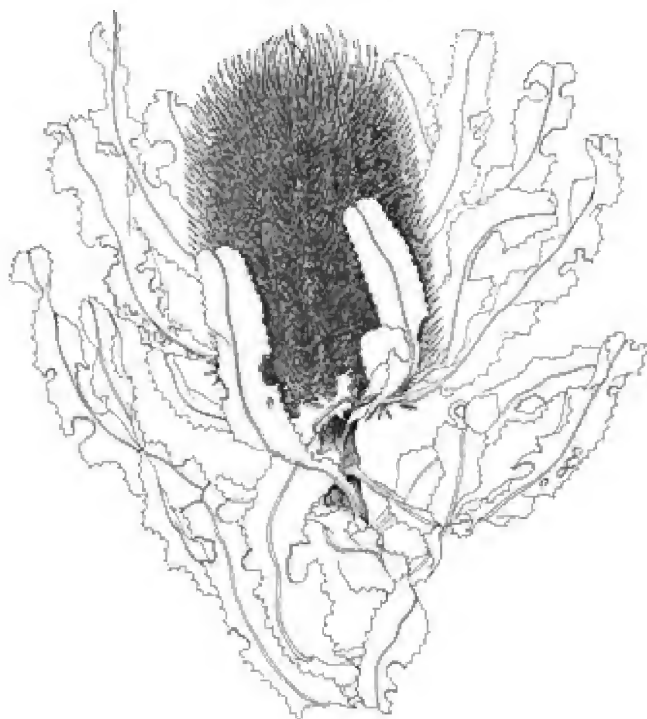
Rarely discussed in garden design history is architect Robin Dods, British-trained, a friend of the great Scottish architect Robert Lorimer, and active in Australia (NSW and Qld) from the mid-1890s until his untimely death in 1920. Clearly influenced by the Arts and Crafts movement, Dods left an outstanding legacy of buildings, but also a small yet compelling legacy of garden designs. Riddell has done a masterly job of resuscitation on Dods—hitherto known only to the architectural cognoscenti—and in passing draws our attention to a fine and unrecognised exponent of the Arts and Crafts garden.

Lynette D. Zeitz, *The Waite: a social and scientific history of the Waite Agricultural Research Institute*, Barr Smith Press, Adelaide, 2014 (ISBN 9781922064615): hardback, 456pp, RRP \$55

Just in from the Barr Smith Press, an imprint of The University of Adelaide Press, is this lavishly produced history of an outstanding agricultural scientific institution. Complementing V.A. Edgeloe’s history of the Waite’s first fifty years, Zeitz succinctly reappraises these early years and then wisely focuses on the period since 1974, one of rapidly shifting horizons where institutional priorities mirror social and scientific change.

Philippa Nikulinsky, *Firewood Banksia*, Fremantle Press, Fremantle, 2014 (ISBN 9781922089816): hardback, 56pp, RRP \$35

*Banksia menziesii* (Firewood Banksia) is indigenous to small area of WA; Avon Wheatbelt, Geraldton Sandplains, Jarrah Forest, and the Swan Coastal Plain.



# Dialogue

## Queen's Birthday honours

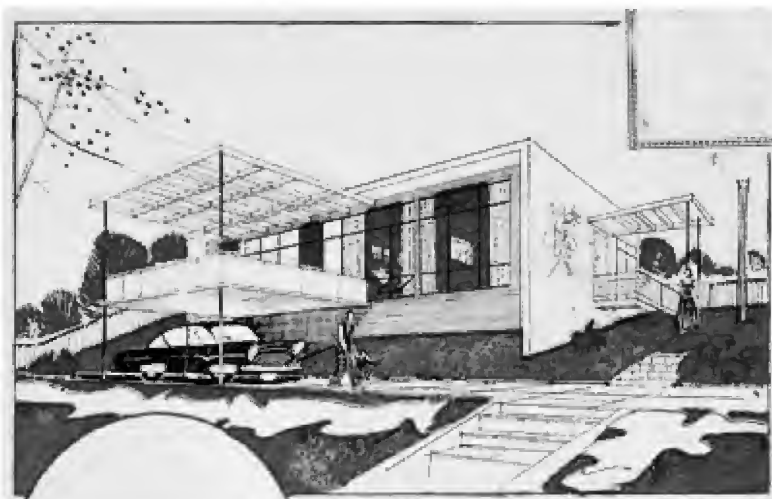
Congratulations to those whose service has been recognised in the 2014 Queen's Birthday honours list. In the field of environmental history, Professor Tom Griffiths was made an Officer (AO) in the General Division 'For distinguished service to tertiary education, particularly social, cultural and environmental history, and through popular and academic contributions to Australian literature.' AGHS member Emeritus Professor Helen Armstrong was made a Member (AM) in the General Division 'For significant service to landscape architecture as an academic, particularly to the study of cultural, heritage and migration environments.' It is pleasing to see recognition for these and others working more widely in the arts, heritage, and the environment.

## Dream Home, Small Home

The Historic Houses Trust of NSW has had a revamp and its exhibitions continue apace. Catch the new Sydney Living Museums exhibition 'Dream Home, Small Home', at the Museum of Sydney, 23 August to 23 November 2014. To be followed by 'Harry Seidler: architecture, art and collaborative design' at MoS from 1 November 2014 to 8 March 2015.

#SLMHomes

[sydneylivingmuseums.com.au/homes](http://sydneylivingmuseums.com.au/homes)



## Jean Galbraith biography

A review of the forthcoming biography *Jean Galbraith* by Meredith Fletcher will be published soon in AGH. In anticipation of this publication, Monash University Publishing is generously offering six copies to giveaway to

AGHS members. For a chance to be one of the recipients please send us your name and address to Gate Lodge, 100 Birdwood Avenue, Melbourne 3004 by Thursday, 31 July 2014. Victorian members are also invited to attend the official launch on Thursday 31 July (bookings essential)—more details on the website.

## New Zealand plants in Australian gardens

In our last issue we incorrectly attributed one of the photographs in Stuart Read's article, 'New Zealand plants in Australian gardens' (AGH 25 (4), pp.6–10). While specimens of *Phormium tenax* 'Variegata' are planted in both the Colac Botanic Gardens and Mawallok, we are grateful to Serena Mitchell for alerting us that the fine specimen pictured on page 9 is in fact growing in her garden at Mawallok.

## Lake Burley Griffin: losing an inspired vision

In the article 'Lake Burley Griffin: losing an inspired vision' by Juliet Ramsay in our last issue—which raises a critical advocacy issue (AGH 25 (4), pp.35–36)—we unintentionally omitted an important cross-reference to a longer, unedited version accessible on the Australian Garden History Society website. Our sincere apologies are extended to the author.

<https://www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au/downloadarea>

## William Colenso and Allan Cunningham: a postscript

Ian St George (whose edited book on Colenso we reviewed in our last issue) writes from Wellington, reflecting on Janet Heywood's article in AGH, 25 (4):

The January 1882 pasted-in page in Colenso's handwriting is a carefully crafted piece of prose and the numbers above the names suggest it is a draft for a publication. I cannot, however, find any such publication. In January 1882 Colenso wrote to naturalist and Geological Survey of New Zealand director James Hector saying he was about to prepare his annual report for the Hawke's Bay Philosophical Institute, so it may be in the 1882 report, of which, apparently, no copy survives.

It is I think more likely to be an extract from a paper Colenso read at the 4th meeting for 1879

of the Institute, reported in *Transactions and Proceedings of the Royal Society of New Zealand* 1897 (12: 459). The Honorary Secretary gave:

an outline memoir of the two brothers Allan and Richard Cunningham, who were both early botanists and discoverers in New Zealand, and whose names are intimately bound up with the Flora of this Colony, as well as with that of the neighbouring Australian Colonies. This narration was supplemented by extracts from Mr. Allan Cunningham's letters to Mr. Colenso, and by a few prominent characteristic passages concerning the two brothers, from botanical and other works little known in New Zealand, and also by portraits of the two unfortunate brothers, who may truly be said to have been martyrs to their favourite science—botany.

From among the many reasons which prevailed with Mr. Colenso to bring this subject before the meeting, the following (mentioned by him) may be particularly noticed:—(1.) The two Cunninghams forming a connecting scientific link in the New Zealand field with those scientific men who accompanied Cook hither on his expeditions; both the Cunninghams having been well-known to Sir Joseph Banks, through whom they also individually received their respective appointments as Government Botanists to New South Wales. (2.) Mr. Colenso's personal knowledge of, and intimate friendship with, the lamented Allan Cunningham.

And (3.) Their many striking discoveries in New Zealand at an early date, which deserve being duly remembered.

It seems Colenso had intended to publish this paper in the embryonic *New Zealand Journal of Science* (G.M. Thomson, editor), but was so incensed by Thomson questioning the validity of some of his new fern names, that he wrote on 6 March 1882 to Thomson:

On the whole, and only after much consideration, I have deemed it best not ... to write for it a Memoir of A. Cunningham as intended. We seem so diametrically opposed in our Botanical views, &c, that I think I had better keep out of your arena altogether ... & I have no desire to be either tacitly passing by or always correcting of error.

Instead, at the Hawke's Bay Philosophical Institute's 4th meeting in 1883, Colenso read another paper "On the Men of Science who preceded us in these Seas and Lands, with particular reference to their labours, adventures, and tragical ends" (illustrated with portraits of Sydney Parkinson, La Perouse, David Douglas, the two brothers Richard and Allan Cunningham, Dr Darwin, Sir J.D. Hooker, and Wm. Swainson; and, also, with some striking views and scenes from La Perouse's Voyage, and Sir J. Ross's Antarctic Expedition).

Neither the 1879 nor the 1883 papers appeared in print, and neither has been found in manuscript.

## Profile: Val Stewart

Val Stewart has been an active member of the AGHS on the Victorian Branch Committee and since 2012 on the National Management Committee.

I come from a long line of dairy farmers on both sides of my family, and my father was a progressive dairy farmer in our district of Nar Nar Goon, in Gippsland, Victoria. I myself swore I would never become a dairy farmer, but somehow ended up buying a small farm in the early 1980s with the intention of running beef. With drought, and finance only available for dairying, this farm commenced with 35 dairy cows including some

stud Holstein dairy cattle, and we were hooked. Larger farms and expansion of herds followed but the need for a change of scene brought me back to Melbourne where I became an agricultural journalist for *Stock & Land* for a few years.

I have a background in science and completed an honours degree in



zoology. With a DipEd I taught secondary school physics, maths, and science—while farming and raising two boys. Throughout, I've maintained my interest in science.

On all of our farms I've constantly planted based on research, including for edible gardens, windbreaks and habitat for birds, and for fencing-off and restoring remnant vegetation. I was an early member of the Land for Wildlife movement and actively involved in the local Landcare Australia group at Yanakie. These involvements reinforced the view that the farm environment should be thought about holistically in order to keep harmony between being a productive farm and encouraging and protecting the biodiversity of the animals and plants in the area and on the farm itself. Upset the balance and you increased the tendency for plagues of insect pests, or erosion, or declining soil quality.

When I moved back to Melbourne and began work as a journalist, I moved towards project management and public relations following further study that augmented my science background. I worked with organisations representing growers and supporting development in the agricultural and farming industries, then moved to Canberra to work for the (then) Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts. Returning to Melbourne, I ultimately became National Executive Officer of the Australian Institute of Conveyancers (AIM), a new field, but one with issues similar to those I had encountered in other organisations—how to have national and state bodies working in harmony and synchrony. I am currently 'retired', though I still do occasional governance and strategic planning work for the AIC.

'Retirement' for me means renovating a large garden on a steep hillside, re-establishing a vegetable garden and orchard, and managing a 35-acre landscape of bush and pasture. My enthusiasm for gardening comes from my childhood. My earliest memories are

of helping my parents water a huge veggie garden, and my mother giving the names of flowers in the garden. I remember loving the perfumes and colours and the fun of playing with snapdragon flowers and popping fuchsia buds. A love of gardening runs through the family—all of my sisters are gardeners. Even my son in Dubai is growing his own vegetables!

Reading the profile of Dominic Cole (AGH 25 (1), 2013), for me many of the issues raised resonated locally. The AGHS has an enormous opportunity to provide education about the need to maintain and conserve examples of gardens of cultural significance, and provide support or advice for those who have gardens 'with history' (not necessarily of high historical significance) who would like to maintain their garden in keeping with the era of their house. That kind of education could provide the leverage whereby those significant gardens are actually conserved or maintained rather than being totally lost except through photos. It is largely beyond the Society to undertake major projects itself (unless we seek some major benefactors or partners), but we can provide the leverage and pressure to encourage funding from other bodies. There is a big role for advocacy for carefully chosen issues.

The issue of maintaining membership is a perennial one for all member associations, and it is important that the membership includes a significant proportion of people not of the baby boomer generation and older—that is, younger people who have the connections with those currently in power and who will be the next group in power. There is even scope for school-based activities to extend education to that level. Conservation groups do this with tree-planting days and school gardens. Perhaps historic schools could interest their students in the history of their school's surrounds or their local botanic garden and actively support it? Food for thought.

## AGHS News

### Website upgrade

Many members will be aware that we have recently upgraded our website. All members with email were sent a new look E-News at the end of May to assist in finding your way through the site as well as to make it quicker and easier for you to locate the items that are of particular interest to you.

To start with we ask you register yourself via the 'Register' section at the top of the webpage. Please choose the 'New Registration' and/or do not enter any payment details. You will then receive an

email welcoming you to the Society with your own individual login information and a password. The system will acknowledge you as a new member—this is because the system is new. Once you are logged in, you will be able to change and update your contact details, including your password and login information. Being registered on the website will also allow you to access member only information on news and events, have access to articles and papers, and allow you access to the blog (more about that further on).



So here is a quick guide to assist in navigating through the site.

**AGHS home page:** Our new look homepage features News and Events, Branches, Photo Gallery, Video Gallery, Blog, Membership, Publications, Journal, Conferences and Tours, Gift Ideas, and a Download Area.

**News and Events** lists a mixture of our current National and Branch news and events. The **Branches** link will take you directly to the list of Branches and your Branch page contains information on all the events your Branch is holding, the Branch Newsletters, and contact information for your Branch Committee. **Photo Gallery** allows us to load photographs of our events, significant gardens, parks, and cultural landscapes. **Video Gallery** is where we will be able to load videos of our forums, talks, and seminars. **Blog** is where you will find information on our Advocacy issues that will allow you to voice your thoughts and opinions on issues close to our hearts. It is hoped that this will bring like-minded members together to discuss issues that matter. It also allows non-members to register and take part in these discussions. **Membership** has options to join the Society or to purchase gift memberships. The **Publications** page lists our available publications with information on each one. Our **Journal Australian Garden History** now has its own page, and we are in the process of loading every cover. Click on the cover and you will be taken to a page outlining the contents of that issue. All issues of the journal will be available to purchase through our Gift Ideas page shortly. **Conferences and Tours** provides you with information on our Conferences and Tours, including the link to the online purchase page. **Gift Ideas** lists all the items you can purchase from us including books, papers, gift cards, and copies of *Australian Garden History*.

**Download Area** is one of our most exciting new features. Here you will be able to access papers electronically. One of the most important aspects of this is with the journal, where we are now able to offer our members that little bit extra. The editors frequently receive articles for inclusion that unfortunately have to be edited down. The Download Area now allows us to offer the full text versions, including appendices and reference pages, of these articles. The last issue of the journal contained two such articles, Juliet Ramsay's article 'Lake Burley Griffin: Losing an Inspired Vision' and Stuart Read's article 'New Zealand Plants in Australian Gardens' as well as his comprehensive Appendix to this article. This is also where you can download the Conference Registration Form.



**Social media links:** We now have our social media links in the top right hand corner of the homepage (they look like Christmas baubles) to link you directly to our Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, and Instagram accounts. We encourage you to 'like' and 'follow us' on these sites.

There are still a few issues we are in the midst of having rectified so we are very grateful for your understanding as we move ahead with our new online presence.

**Phoebe LaGerche-Wijsman**  
Executive Officer

[www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au](http://www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au)

## Review of *Studies in Australian Garden History*

The National Management Committee has embarked on a review of the Society's peer-refereed journal *Studies in Australian Garden History*. This will involve wide consultation with past editors and contributors, as well as a wide circle of potential contributors drawn from a wide circle of professional, academic, and other scholarly communities. A draft report is to be considered by the NMC at its meeting prior to the Albany conference.

## 2014 Annual National Conference

There are still a few places to attend this year's Annual National Conference, 'The Great Southern', in Albany, Western Australia. Please call the National Office for more information.

# Diary dates

## JULY 2014

**Sunday 13** AGM and The last of the romantics WESTERN AUSTRALIA

WA Branch AGM followed by guest speaker by Anne Vale on 'The last of the romantics: lady garden makers'. Anne's book *Exceptional Australian Garden Makers* will be available for sale. 2pm, Grove Community Centre, Peppermint Grove.

**Wednesday 16** Flora on the move ACT/RIVERINA/MONARO

Max Bourke AM will discuss acclimatisation ideas from the nineteenth century and beyond, and their implications. 6pm, Australian Catholic University, Watson.

**Thursday 17** Winter lecture series VICTORIA

'Garden writers and Philosophers of the 1980s, lecture presented by Anne Vale. 6–8pm, Mueller Hall, National Herbarium, Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra. \$20 members \$25 non-members, \$10 students (with student card). Book through Trybooking <http://www.trybooking.com/EFWD>. Enquiries to Lisa Tuck on 0418 590 891 or [LisaTuckI@bigpond.com](mailto:LisaTuckI@bigpond.com)

**Saturday 19** Working bee TASMANIA

Working bee at Mount Boninyong. Contact Fran Faul on 9853 1369 or email [malfaul@alphalink.com.au](mailto:malfaul@alphalink.com.au)

**Sunday 20** Poisonous plants in Queensland gardens QUEENSLAND

Lecture by Dr Ross McKenzie, a retired veterinary pathologist, toxicologist, and research scientist from the Queensland Department of Primary Industries. 2pm, Queensland Herbarium. A visit to Dr McKenzie's garden *Yapunyah*, 26 Cypress Drive, Ashgrove, will follow.

**Sunday 27** Stirling and Hills region archival collections SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Presentation by Committee members of the Mount Lofty Districts Historical Society on archival collections of the Society relating to gardens in the Stirling and Hills region. 2–4pm, Stirling Library, Mount Barker Road, Stirling. Cost: \$5 per person. Details in Branch newsletter.

**Sunday 27** In the steps of Joseph Hooker: botanical trailblazer TASMANIA

Lecture presented by Peter Donaldson, Australian film-maker undertaking a major documentary project retracing the travels of Sir Joseph Dalton Hooker through the Himalayas, the Antarctic, Australia, New Zealand, and the USA. Refer to the Branch webpage for more details closer to the event.

**Sunday 27** Old Science Road, University of Sydney SYDNEY

Walk and talk down Old Science Road, University of Sydney, Camperdown Campus led by Christine Hay. 2–4pm, meeting place to be confirmed when booking. Cost: \$20 members, \$30 guests, includes light refreshments. Bookings essential. See Branch webpage for details.

## AUGUST 2014

**Sunday 10** Winter seminar and AGM SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS

Two guest speakers, author Stephen Ryan (former ABC Gardening Australia presenter) on 'Developing a country garden: the Mt Macedon experience', and horticulturist Paul Kirkpatrick on 'The weird and wonderful world of plant collectors: Kew stories'. See Branch webpage for further details.

**Saturday 16** Working bee VICTORIA

Working bee at Mooleric. Contact Fran Faul 9853 1369 or email [malfaul@alphalink.com.au](mailto:malfaul@alphalink.com.au)

**Sunday 17** AGM and 30th birthday party SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Luncheon at Carrick Hill. Foundation members of the Branch will be invited to attend. 12–3pm. Details in Branch newsletter.

---

<b>Sunday 17</b>	<b>South American gardens and AGM</b>	<b>QUEENSLAND</b>
------------------	---------------------------------------	-------------------

---

Kim Woods Rabbidge will provide an illustrated lecture of her successful tour of South America, referring to two well-known gardener designers; Roberto Marx Burle from Brazil and Juan Grimm from Chile. See Branch webpage for further details.

<b>Tuesday 19</b>	<b>Winter lecture series and AGM</b>	<b>VICTORIA</b>
-------------------	--------------------------------------	-----------------

---

'Insights into the Travels and Botany of Joseph Hooker' by Dr Peter Donaldson. 6–8pm, AGM followed by illustrated lecture, Mueller Hall, National Herbarium, Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra. \$20 AGHS members, \$25 non-members, \$10 students (with student card). Bookings essential. Book through Trybooking <http://www.trybooking.com/EFWE>. Enquiries to Lisa Tuck on 0418 590 891 or [LisaTuckI@bigpond.com](mailto:LisaTuckI@bigpond.com)

<b>Wednesday 20</b>	<b>Jardins Anglo-Chinois in eighteenth-century France</b>	<b>SYDNEY</b>
---------------------	---	---------------

---

Talk by Jennifer Milam. 6 for 7–8.30pm, Annie Wyatt Room, National Trust Centre, Observatory Hill. Cost: \$20 members, \$30 guests, includes light refreshments. Bookings essential. See Branch webpage for details.

<b>Sunday 24</b>	<b>Today's gardens—tomorrow's heritage</b>	<b>TASMANIA</b>
------------------	--	-----------------

---

Lecture by well-known landscape architect Jerry de Gryse. See Branch webpage for further details.

<b>Late August–early September</b>	<b>Smith's Nursery, Riddell's Creek</b>	<b>VICTORIA</b>
------------------------------------	---	-----------------

---

Self drive visit to Smith's Nursery, Riddell's Creek with John Hawker, Heritage Victoria. BYO picnic lunch. Date and details to be confirmed on the Victorian Branch website.

## SEPTEMBER 2014

<b>Wednesday 3</b>	<b>Banongil Station</b>	<b>VICTORIA</b>
--------------------	-------------------------	-----------------

---

Day tour to Banongil Station where the daffodils should be in full bloom. Members only. Cost: \$80, but may vary according to numbers, includes transport, morning tea and lunch. TryBooking details to follow. Enquiries to Lisa Tuck on 0418 590 891 or [LisaTuckI@bigpond.com](mailto:LisaTuckI@bigpond.com)

<b>Friday 5</b>	<b>Heritage gardens day: Ioadja</b>	<b>SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS</b>
-----------------	-------------------------------------	---------------------------

---

This event will include a tour by owners, morning tea, and lunch. Enquiries (for this event only) to Laurel Cheetham on (02) 4861 7132.

<b>Saturday 13–Sunday 14</b>	<b>Double working bee</b>	<b>VICTORIA</b>
------------------------------	---------------------------	-----------------

---

Working bees will be at Eurambeen and Belmont. Contact Fran Faul on (030) 9853 1369 or email [malfaul@alphalink.com.au](mailto:malfaul@alphalink.com.au)

<b>Wednesday 17</b>	<b>Ipswich</b>	<b>QUEENSLAND</b>
---------------------	----------------	-------------------

---

Trip to Ipswich including house tour of Woodlands and lunch there, followed by visit to Queens Park with afternoon tea. Organised by Wendy Lees. See Qld Branch webpage for details.

<b>Saturday 20</b>	<b>Everglades and The Braes, Leura</b>	<b>SYDNEY</b>
--------------------	--	---------------

---

Guided walk at Everglades followed by light lunch and a visit to nearby garden The Braes in Leura. 11am–3.30pm, meeting place to be confirmed when booking. Cost: \$35 members, \$40 guests, includes light lunch. Bookings essential. See Branch webpage for details.

<b>Date to be advised</b>	<b>Tasmania</b>	<b>TASMANIA</b>
---------------------------	-----------------	-----------------

---

Edna Walling and Kitty Henry gardens in Hobart. Date and details to be confirmed on the Tasmanian Branch webpage.

## OCTOBER 2014

<b>Friday 17–Monday 20</b>	<b>AGHS Annual Nation Conference, Albany, Western Australia</b>
----------------------------	---

---

The Australian Garden History Society's 35th Annual National Conference will be held in Albany, WA, 17–20 October 2014.



## Mission Statement

The Australian Garden History Society is the leader in concern for and conservation of significant cultural landscapes and historic gardens through committed, relevant and sustainable action.